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OR,  
*THE WAY OF LIFE.*

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# GLAD TIDINGS;

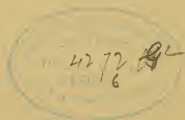
OR

## THE WAY OF LIFE.

BY ROBERT BOYD, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF "YOUNG CONVERTS," "MY INQUIRY MEETING," &c., &c.

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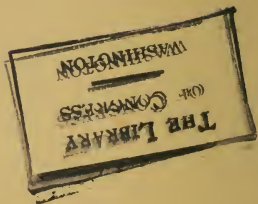
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# GLAD TIDINGS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### GOOD NEWS.

THERE is much misunderstanding in the minds of many in regard to the word "Gospel." Some think of everything they hear preached from the Bible under this general appellation. Whether the minister be preaching on the being of a God, the immortality of the soul, or on the moral duties which arise from our social relationships, it is all, by such persons, called preaching the Gospel. Some time ago we heard a minister preach on the subject of prayer. It was a faithful and powerful sermon. It lifted the soul up to God, and made many a hearer say, "It is good to be here." At the close of the services we heard one of the hearers say to another, "That was a fine Gospel sermon." Now, the fact is, there was not one word of Gospel in it. A man may preach a whole year, or for that part, a whole lifetime, and preach truth, too, and yet not preach the Gospel.

The celebrated Andrew Fuller once heard a young brother preach a sermon which might be called eloquent and learned. When the preacher came down from the pulpit, Fuller laid his hand upon his shoulder, and said, "I thank you for your sermon; it was very good, *as far as it went*." "As far as it went!" said the preacher. "Yes," said Fuller, "as far as it went, for Christ was not preached." "But Christ was not in

the Text," replied the young man. "My brother," said Fuller, "there are no by-lanes in this country which do not lead up to the King's highway." All the lines of truth centre in Jesus, and that is a poor dry morsel of a sermon that does not contain enough of the Gospel, to lead any inquiring soul present to pardon and peace. We greatly admire the sentiment of one of the ancient Fathers—"Were the highest heavens my pulpit, and the whole hosts of the redeemed my audience, and eternity my day, Jesus alone would be my text."

The Gospel means "good news," and is a proclamation from the God of heaven to his guilty creatures on earth, that for the sake of what Jesus has done, he will pardon all who trust in his faithful work, and receive them as welcomely as if they had never sinned at all. It comes to tell of a way by which we can come to God as joyfully as Adam could before he fell. God's Fatherly voice sounds to us from the heavens, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." The good news is in that sentence. Observe, the voice from heaven did not say, *with* whom I am well pleased, though that is true. Neither does it say *for* whom I am well pleased, though that is also true. But it says *in* whom I am well pleased. It is only when we see God in Christ Jesus that we can see a well-pleased God. In that *one sentence*, God himself preached the Gospel to that awe-struck throng which stood upon the banks of Jordan; and through them to all the ends of the earth.

If we approach God out of Christ, he is a consuming fire. Let the best man that ever lived come before God with the best action he ever performed, and out of Christ God cannot be well pleased with him. His best performances are in God's pure eyes corrupted to the very core by sin. But let the vilest sinner come to God in Christ, and there is lifted up upon him a reconciled countenance, the smile of approval beams upon his soul with the very joy of heaven, and lifting up his eyes to the face of the Judge, he exclaims, "Abba, Father." Indeed a holy and a just God could bestow upon guilty man no favor, either temporal or spiritual, except through the worthiness of His Son.

A person once said, "How am I to know that Jesus died for me?" The reply was, "Do you acknowledge that you have been all your life a sinner?" "I do." "And do you believe that the desert of sin is the wrath and curse of God?" "Yes." "Why, then, is it that you have been all your life long getting nothing from God's hand but blessings?" This inquirer saw at once that the very sparing forbearance of God that had permitted him to live, and the goodness of God that strewed his pathway with blessings, could only come to him through the death of Jesus.

Suppose, my reader, that a friend comes into your house to-day and says, "I have good news for you;" you would understand by that, that he had something to tell you that would make you happy. And if after he has made his statement you are not any happier than before, one of two things must be the case,—either your friend was mistaken as to the nature of the intelligence, and it was not calculated to make you happy; or else you *did not believe* what he said. Now, when God sends the Gospel to us he says it is good news, that is, something intended to make us happy; and if after we have heard it we are not made happy by it, either God calls that good news which is not so, or we have not believed his word. Yes, the only reason why you, my reader, are not now rejoicing in the forgiving love of God, is that you have not believed his testimony concerning his Son. You can believe your fellowmen when they say they have good news for you; you can take up the newspaper, with a face beaming with expectation, when you are told there is good news for you in it; and yet your neglected Bible lies in your houses containing something calculated and intended to make you unspeakably happy; and you will not believe it.

O, it is matter of vastest difficulty to get men to believe that the whole work of their salvation is finished already! They will acknowledge that the favor of God is a precious thing; they will speak of making their peace with God; and hope that he will be reconciled to them. But tell them of a love that has already made the peace; tell them of a grace that has already finished the salvation; tell them of a goodness so abundant

and overflowing that it has absolutely left them nothing to do but to believe that all is done,—and you seem to them as one who mocks. Whenever they think of becoming serious, of cultivating good feelings, of breaking off their outward sins, and of prayer, they think of things that are to qualify them for coming to Jesus, and that will make God pleased with them; forgetting that until they go to Jesus through faith, and come to God for acceptance through the righteousness of his Son, they have not taken the very *first step* in true religion.

Self-righteousness, in some form or other, is the universal sin of man. Wherever man is found to exist, it reigns supreme in the unrenewed heart. The moment the sinner begins to think or speak on religion, this evil shows itself. With the light of the Gospel blazing around him, with Calvary's solemn scenes portrayed in blood before him, he yet feels as if he must be accepted by God on the ground of some good prayer, some good feelings, or some good deeds performed by himself. Now, the best obedience that man can render in his fallen state is imperfect. And an imperfect obedience is just a sinful obedience—a wicked obedience. Now, if God were to accept men on the ground of such obedience, it would be virtually declaring that his law had been too strict—had been wrong. From that moment his holy law would be impeached, would lose its power among all intelligent beings, and its holy authority would be forever gone.

Let the sinner start for heaven on the ground of his own imperfect righteousness, and he can only get there by trampling, at every step, upon the holy law of the God of heaven. And allowing him at last to get there on the ground of his own imperfect obedience, his presence would strike terror into every holy heart in heaven. The songs of that holy place would die away in groans. Its inhabitants would feel that all protection was gone, all confidence gone—if God's perfect law was gone. How, then, can the sinner hope for salvation in a way that would swallow up heaven itself in the misery of hell.

Were God to accept the sinner on the ground of his own righteousness, it would be declaring the death of his own Son

unnecessary. It would be saying that it had been in vain that the blood of Jesus was shed. It would be to declare the atonement a piece of folly—nay, of absolute wickedness. The very fact that God's own Son had to die, shows that nothing but a perfect righteousness would do, a righteousness so perfect that God's pure eye cannot see a single flaw in it. It shows that we needed a righteousness no less than Divine, and here it is provided in Christ crucified. Sinner! abandon at once the vain attempt to make a covering for yourself, by patching together the fig-leaves of your own works; for to you in God's great name we proclaim the Gospel's joyful sound—a righteousness unto all, and upon all, who believe.

My dear reader, if you are ever saved at all, you must be saved by simple faith in Christ's work. We know that the natural heart hates this doctrine, and that it contradicts all man's preconceived notions of religion. It lays pride in the dust and leaves the soul no room for boasting. Take the holiest man now living, and the vilest sinner that treads God's earth, and it is faith in the merits of Jesus that has made the difference.

Suppose we had been in the city of Philippi that night when the jailor was converted. It is the dark, midnight hour, and the city is wrapped in silence and gloom. We stand opposite to a gloomy-looking building, and as we gaze upon it through the darkness, it begins to heave to and fro, as if rocked in the grasp of an earthquake. Hark! A voice of deep human agony breaks upon our ear. It is the voice of the jailor himself, smitten by the bolt of divine truth, and his words are, "What shall I do to be saved?" And what are the directions which the Apostles give him? Do they tell him he must pray, that he must get deeper feeling, more convictions of his sinful state, and do something to prepare himself for coming to Jesus? No such directions do we find coming from the lips of these heaven-inspired men; though, alas! there are not wanting in our day professed ministers of the Gospel who would give just such instruction.

An inquirer was urged some time ago to go to the Lord's Supper, by a minister. "How can I, when I have no hope in Christ?"

was the reply. "O come to the communion, and you will feel better," said the minister. How beautifully do the Apostle's words contrast with this. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." And what did the jailor do? Did he say, "That is too easy a way of being saved: it is not possible that so vile a man as I am could be saved in that way"? No! at once he believed in the Son of God as *his* Saviour, and his heart was brimming over with joy. An old writer says there are but three steps to heaven—"out of self, into Christ, and into glory." If you are out of Christ, whatever may be the outward morality of your conduct, you are condemned already—living under the curse of the law, and the bolt of God's wrath may at any moment strike you. There is but one safe spot for you in the whole universe, and that is as a humble believer at the cross of Christ.



## CHAPTER II.

### IMMANUEL, GOD WITH US.

“He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.”

These words came from the lips of the Lord Jesus, and there are no words like his words. They burn into the soul for they are words of heavenly fire. Words of wisdom have been spoken by Christ's people, for the brightest intellects and the most powerful eloquence have been devoted to his service; but “never man spake like this man.” Something of God, it is true, we can learn from his works; and as we gaze upon the lofty overhanging cliff, the sky-piercing mountain, or the vast ocean, we are penetrated with feelings of profoundest awe; we exclaim, “Great and Infinite God!” and the cry is taken up in the heavens, and is re-echoed from world to world throughout infinite space.

But nature, in all her vastness, says not one word on what, as sinners, we most want to hear—PARDON. Not a whisper of forgiveness comes to us from the blue heavens above us, nor from any of the works of God around us. The thought of the great God, girt with omnipotence, makes us afraid. The great, infinite, all-pervading Spirit we cannot comprehend. The thought of going into his presence repels rather than attracts.—“I remembered God and was troubled.”

But when God comes near to us in human flesh, when God approaches me in the person of a man like myself, when I hear God speaking to me through human lips, looking kindly upon me through human eyes, dropping over my wretchedness human tears, and heaving over me human groans, as he speaks to me of love, of pardon, and of adoption into his family of love, the guilty dread of God flees away, and perfect love, that casteth out all fear, takes its place. Now this is what we see in the God-man—“God manifest in the flesh.”

Suppose that you were to enter a friend's house, and see his

little children amusing themselves with that perfect enjoyment of the present peculiar to childhood; not a cloud upon their fair brows, not a shade of sorrow upon their faces. You are standing and admiring the lovely scene, when, all at once, the father of these children is heard at the door, and in a moment the whole scene is changed. The children look around in terror; the faces so lately flushed with joy are now pale with fear, and they each make haste to hide themselves from the father as from an object of aversion and dread. Now, in witnessing such a sight as this, you would know that one of two things must be the case: either that father is a tyrant, and is in the habit of abusing his children, or else these children are conscious of having done wrong in his absence, and, therefore, are afraid to face him.

Why has the sinner that dread of God which makes him shun the very thought of his Creator, as the essence of all that is gloomy and forbidding? Why does he dread the idea of going into God's presence, and coming so near the universal Father as death brings men? It cannot be because God has ever done him any wrong, for the hand that he dreads has been engaged in scattering mercies upon his pathway, and every gesture of that hand has been inviting him near. The voice he dreads to hear has been tuned to accents of love, and has sounded after him down the broad road to death—"Turn ye, turn ye,—why will ye die?" Why, then, this slavish dread at the thought of God? Why this enmity and aversion? Ah! it is because the soul is conscious of guilt, and of having wickedly lifted the standard of rebellion against its best friend. It is because this consciousness of guilt makes him think of God as a God of wrath, the red thunderbolt of whose indignation is about to leap from his right hand for the sinner's destruction.

Now, man can neither love God nor enjoy happiness till this feeling is destroyed, and till entire confidence in Jehovah's love is restored. We see these remarks illustrated in our first parents. As long as they believed in God's love, they remained holy and happy; the moment they believed Satan's lie, who taught them that God was selfish,—that he was keeping some-

thing back from them that was really good for them, and the reason why this good was kept back was lest they should come to know as much as himself,—the very moment they believed this falsehood, they fell, and guilty dread of God took the place of confidence and love.

The very beings who but a few moments before were sending up their songs of love and joy, and forming no unhappy harmony with the loftier songs of heaven, are now in terror fleeing from the sound of the Lord's voice, and trying to hide themselves among the trees of the garden. Why is Adam now so unhappy? As yet there is no change in his outward surroundings. The fruits are as pleasant to the taste, the flowers are as fragrant to the smell, the air as balmy, and the music of the birds as sweet as ever. His body is yet in paradise, but in his soul have begun the very elements of hell—a plain proof that no outward possessions can make man happy while his soul is estranged from the fountain of all good.

In "Immanuel, God with us," we see Satan's lie fully refuted. We see the God we supposed was full of vindictive wrath, coming near to us in human flesh, with the tear of pity in his eye, and words of inviting love upon his lips. We see that God *so* loved us, that he stepped from his throne at the very summit of glory, and sought for us on the mountains of sin. We see that we do not need to do anything to make God love us, for that love has existed all along; that we do not need to do something to reconcile God to us, for whoever was in the wrong must come and be reconciled to the right; hence God is in Christ reconciling *not himself to the world, but the world to himself*.

In short, we see that as man departed from God by believing Satan's lie, and disbelieving God's truth, so he must return by disbelieving Satan's lie, and believing God's truth. And as he lost his happiness when he lost his confidence in God's disinterested love, so he can never regain his happiness till he believes in that love as displayed in Christ Jesus. Hence it is written, "*Acquaint thyself with God and be at peace with him.*" And again, "*They that know Thee shall put their trust in Thee.*" That is, the moment they really *know God*, as he is re-

vealed in the Gospel, that moment they are at peace with Him. But a man may know about God, and yet not know God. He may be a profound theologian, and be able to discourse eloquently upon the attributes of God, and yet in the true spiritual sense know no more of him than a Hottentot. To know God is to know him as my forgiving Father, and this I can only know through Jesus Christ His Son.

In the light of these remarks, how important does the doctrine of Christ's divinity appear! Take away that truth out of the Bible, and you shatter to pieces humanity's life-boat, and leave man a miserable wreck upon the shores of eternity. This is the keystone of that bridge that crosses the gulf of human despair, and let it be taken away and the whole fabric falls to pieces. This is the most dangerous error that has ever cursed our world, for it strikes at the root of the atonement, the only hope of man. Hence, when Infidels would destroy Christianity under the most plausible form, they have begun by denying the divinity of Christ. If some being vested with great power wished to destroy our solar system, it would not be necessary to go from orb to orb, destroying one after another: it would only be necessary to dash out the sun, and the whole would rush wildly into one mass of ruin. So men wishing to be called Christians, have taken away our Lord's divinity, and thus removed the life and power of the whole Christian system. But they cannot impose upon the pious soul, the dead body for the living form. When they talk of Christ, it is not the Christ of the Bible they speak of, but a Christ formed in their own vain imaginations; and however much they may extol him as a good and, virtuous man, the believer says, "Ye have taken away my Lord, and I know not where ye have laid him."

Sinner! In the tears and sufferings of the God-man, see how great must be your danger. The tears of Jesus over your perishing state, and the deep anxieties of his soul for your salvation, show how fearful is your peril. You are out in a steamboat upon the lake, enjoying a pleasure excursion, on a lovely summer day. There is not a cloud in the sky, nor a ripple upon the waters. The calm bosom of the lake reflects

all that is bright and beautiful in the firmament above. The thought of danger never crosses your mind, and you are sinking down into sweet enjoyment of the whole scene, when suddenly you see the captain rush across the deck with tears rolling down his cheeks, and much excited; you also see the crew deeply affected, and you would at once begin to think there must be danger, though you could not see it.

Now, when we see God in human form weeping and bleeding for sinners, there must be some fearful peril—there must be some deep damnation, on the brink of which your soul is toppling! O, at once go to the Captain of our Salvation, and cry, “Lord save, or I perish!”—and that hand that bears the print of the nail, and yet is the hand that guides the stars in their courses, will pluck you from destruction, and give you a place among his loved ones on earth, and at last among his redeemed ones in heaven. But remember that the same hand that is strong to save is also strong to smite. The feet of those who have carried others to their burial, may be at the door to entomb you. The shuttle may have passed the loom and have woven the last garment in which your cold corpse is to be enshrouded, and this night your soul may stand before God. Dear reader, would you dare to stand there in a Christless state? As a consuming fire would that holy presence be to your guilty soul.

### CHAPTER III.

#### SINAI AND CALVARY.

“He that believeth not is condemned already.”

It is not necessary for the man out of Christ to wait till the day of his death, or the day of Judgment, to be condemned, for *now* he is under the curse of the law; and the curse of the law is the curse of God. Go where he will, do what he may, that curse is upon him. He may banish the remembrance of it from his thoughts; he may plunge into scenes of gay and fashionable resort; he may engross his mind with the cares and perplexities of business; he may roam amid the fields of literature and art, and expand his intellect amid the wonderful revelations of science; but employ himself as he may, the sentence of death has gone forth against him; and the execution of that sentence is only suspended to afford him an opportunity of going to Christ for pardon and eternal life.

When he lies upon his bed at night that curse surrounds it like a curtain; when he walks by the way it is his attendant; and when he laughs in the theatre, or in the bar-room, or at the festive board, that tremendous curse frowns in wrath over his head. The law says, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in *all things* that are written in the book of the law, to do them.” Now, dear reader, if you can show that since the moment that you became a responsible being to the present time, you have never sinned in thought, word, or deed; that you have loved God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself, during the whole of your life,—then you are not under the curse, but can claim eternal life as a right, according to the terms of the law: “Do and live.” Your conscience testifies, however that you have not thus lived a perfectly holy life, and the want of this perfect holiness brings upon you the curse of which we have spoken.

No man will ever go to Christ for a blessing till he feels himself burdened with this curse. The hoarse, stern voice of justice, must be heard from Sinai, pronouncing our condemnation, before we will listen to the "still small voice" of love from Calvary, declaring our justification. It is in vain that you press food upon a man who is not hungry, or offer alms to one who thinks himself rich and increased in goods. So, till the soul feels its lost and undone condition, there will be no music in the name Jesus, and no attraction in Calvary. The sinner must be made to feel that God cannot permit his law to be trampled upon with impunity, and that sin is the most fearful thing in the whole universe; for if it is pardoned, it can only be blotted out through the untold sufferings of God's own Son,—if unpardoned, it must be followed by an eternity of woe.

A German Prince, upon visiting France went to see the place where many convicts were confined. In compliment to his rank, he was permitted to signalize his visit by giving one of the convicts his liberty. He spoke to one man, whose intelligent look attracted his notice, and asked him for what crime he was suffering. In reply the convict began to tell him the most unlikely story of his innocence, and of how false witnesses swore against him. The Prince left him and put the same question to another, who also denied his guilt, and averred that he was mistaken for another man. The same question was put to several others, and with the same result; till at last he came to a man whose solemn and melancholy cast of countenance attracted his notice. The man's reply was, "I have been a vile wretch, and have deserved far more than my present punishment. I have set at open defiance the laws both of God and men, and am not fit to look upon God's blue heavens or the green earth." The Prince, turning to his attendants, said, "Set this man free; he is in a fit state of mind to make a proper use of his liberty."

It is thus that the Prince of Peace receives and pardons the sinner, when he is in a state of mind that justifies God and condemns himself. When the pride of the soul is subdued, then the sinner ceases to look at himself in the mirror of the world's notions and maxims about human nature, which makes the

most deformed look comely in their own eyes; but he now looks at himself in the mirror of God's law, and the result is, he sees himself in some measure as God sees him; and "abhors himself, and repents in dust and ashes."

We have an illustration of the truth of these remarks in the religious history of the Apostle Paul. He says, "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." He stood high in his own estimation. He thought himself in high favor with God—as good as any of his acquaintances, and better than most. He tells us that the reason of this good opinion of himself was, that he was "without the law." This does not mean that he was without the *knowledge* of the law, for, doubtless, from a child he could repeat the law of God correctly.

But it means that he was ignorant of the far-reaching spirituality of God's law, extending as it does to the thoughts and feelings of the heart. He could point to one commandment after another, and proudly say, "I have never broken any of them," and so far as the outward act is concerned, this was doubtless true; but he forgot that the revengeful thought is murder, that the covetous thought is theft, and that the unchaste thought is adultery; he forgot that it is in vain that we go through a heartless round of religious ceremonies, if love to God is not the grand motive power that governs our lives. Hence, when the spirituality of the law flashed upon his mind, in the light of a new conviction, and, to use his own words, "the commandment came, sin revived, and I died," then the sins of his whole life appeared before him, unpardoned, black in their aggravations, and loudly calling for God's wrath upon his head. His hope perished; his delusion was torn away; the fabric that he had built upon the sand lay around him, a pile of ruins. Sin seemed "*exceeding* sinful."

Like a man who supposed himself rich and increased with goods, and who, with much self-complacency, put his hand into his pocket to pull out his well-filled purse, and instead, put his fingers upon the slimy folds of a loathsome serpent that lies there. With what loathing and disappointment would he draw



back his hand! Like a man who supposes himself well dressed, and is on the way to attend a gay and fashionable party, but when he enters the well-lighted room, and when the scrutiny of a hundred eyes is on him, he looks upon himself, and finds that he is covered with "filthy rags."—With what shame and confusion would he shrink away! Thus it was with Paul when he saw the purity of God's law, and felt himself the subject of its terrible curse. When he was thus emptied of self, he was in a state to be filled with Christ; and when his false hope went out in darkness, the hope in Jesus, "that maketh not ashamed," arose in imperishable splendor upon his soul. In his own words, "the law was a schoolmaster to bring him to Christ."

We see, then, that the reason why there are so many who are boasting of their morality and wrapping themselves up in a self-righteous security is because they measure themselves by a false standard of their own making. And until they can be induced to abandon that false measure, and try themselves by the perfect purity of God's law, the cross of Christ will appear to them foolishness, and those truths that fill all heaven with rapture will fall upon their ears as the whistling of the empty wind.

Here is a man, for example, who thinks that all God requires of him is to live a strictly moral life. To be honest in his dealings with his fellowmen, to be kind and benevolent to the suffering and the destitute, to be a good citizen, and discharge with fidelity the relative duties of life—this is his standard of duty, and he comes up to it. He *is* an honest man. He *is* a kind neighbor, a good husband, an affectionate father. He has a great respect for religion and for its ministers. He goes regularly to the house of God, and contributes liberally to the support of the Gospel. In short, he comes up, in every respect, to his own standard of what a Christian should be, and the result is, he is at peace. No disturbing doubt alarms him. He is "alive without the law."

Such a man can never be converted, can never repent and believe in Christ, till he is induced to measure himself by a different standard. Such a man may like to hear the most faithful preaching, because he is persuaded that it does not mean *him*. And men like to hear the condemnation of things that they never will take home to themselves. They like to hear God's threat-

enings spoken in a way that never touches their consciences. They like practical preaching that does not rebuke them. Some years ago I met a man whose case may illustrate the above remarks. In the course of some conversation on religious subjects, I asked him if he was a Christian. He seemed astonished at the question, but promptly replied that he was. I then asked him how long it was since the great change had taken place. He replied that his parents had been good Christian people; that in his infancy he had been baptized into the true church; that he regularly received the sacrament from the hands of the minister; and that he did not know what I meant by *the great change*. I told him that though it was a great privilege to be born of pious parents, yet the religion of heaven was not hereditary—not a thing that ran in the blood; that as to his belonging to the true church, that could not save him, for Judas outwardly belonged to the true church, and yet went to hell; that his baptism could not save him, for Simon was baptized by the hands of an inspired Apostle, and yet “had neither part nor lot in this matter.” I read the conversation of our Lord with Nicodemus, and urged upon him the necessity of a change of heart.

He now became very solemn, said he knew that he had not attended to these things as he ought, but that of late he had become a changed character; that for the last few weeks he had read three chapters out of the Bible, and prayed three times every day; and, if that was not religion, he did not know what it was. I tried to show him the purity and far-reaching nature of God’s law; that as a sinner the curse of the law was upon him; and that, though he could begin from that moment and live a perfectly holy life till the moment of his death, even then he could not be saved, for his past sins, in all their condemning power, would still be against him. I tried to lead him to Calvary for salvation. Pointing him to a *finished work* that his own *good works*, and *prayers*, and *tears* could add nothing to, I told him that at that moment there was nothing between him and pardon but his own *unbelief*. He was urged to believe that Jesus died for *him* as if he had been the only sinner in the world. He received the testimony of God, and was soon able to say with Paul, “He loved *me* and gave himself for *me*.”

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE SPIRIT STRIVING.

A thoughtless sinner! It is hard to conceive of a more melancholy sight. With the certainty of soon standing in the presence of a holy God; with innumerable sins staining his soul, not one of which he can wash away; with a soul more valuable than he has even imagination to conceive of, and that must be suffering or enjoying, when suns and systems shall have gone to the general pile of ruin; with responsibilities under which an angel might tremble,—there he is, utterly careless.

The Great God has taken such a deep interest in his welfare, that for a time he emptied heaven of the most lovely object in it, and sent his Son on a mission of love to the perishing millions of our race. The Son so loved him, that he endured the agonies of the cross, and refused to come down till he had finished the work of human redemption. The Holy Spirit feels such an interest in him, that, though hating his sins with a perfect hatred, He still follows him with the importunities of love. The holy angels take such an interest in him that they watch for his repentance; and yet, there he is, careless about himself!

But when the sinner begins to *think*,—to look eternity and all its awful realities in the face,—his case is truly hopeful. See that young man taken out of a river, supposed to be drowned. The physician is using every means to restore animation. The mother of that youth hangs over him in an agony of suspense; and when at last there is seen the first movements of returning life, the fluttering of the heart, the quivering of the eyelids, and the heaving of the deep groan, I see that mother clasp her hands, and, turning her tearful eyes to heaven, she cries, "Thank God, he lives."

Sinner, the Book of God describes you as dead in "trespasses and sins," and this is true, not only of the most abandoned sin-

ners, but of the most amiable and moral. Death appears in different forms, sometimes horrid and revolting, and sometimes lovely and attractive. Go over the battle field, after the conflict is over, and you will see death in some of its most revolting forms; but look upon that babe on its mother's knee, upon whose lovely countenance death has just stamped his seal, and death is seen there in a most attractive aspect; but the man slain in battle and the babe are both alike dead.

And it is the Holy Spirit alone that can speak life into the dead soul. We might gather around one sinner all the faithful ministers of the Gospel now living, and all the praying people who hold up their arms by their fervent supplications; and they might try by their prayers and exhortations to save the soul of that one sinner and continue their efforts for years, and they could not produce one good thought, nor one saving impression, without the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Dear reader, if this Divine Agent has indeed begun to operate upon your soul, and to produce some signs of spiritual life, it is with you a very solemn and critical period. You cannot remain long in this state, for either you will allow the Spirit to lead you to the Lord Jesus for pardon and peace, or you will resist him, and sink back into a state of more hardened obduracy. A crisis—a turning point in the history of your soul—has come when it will be easier for you to become a Christian, than it ever was before, or, perhaps, than it ever will be again.

The Spirit has startled your soul from its long and death-like torpor. The people of God are praying for you, and trying to point you to the Lamb of God. The word preached from the pulpit sounds to you now as it never did before; pointed, personal, and solemn as the blast of the last trumpet, it reaches your trembling heart with an awakening, "Thou art the man!" Memory is turning over the pages of your past life, and the sins you have committed, the prayers and counsels of a pious mother that you have despised, the Sabbaths you have squandered,—all are speaking to you in words of rebuke that are heard through every chamber of the soul. Oh! now is the most favorable time you will ever have to accept the offers of the Gospel!

But resist the Spirit, and your mind will become dark as perdition on the things of God, and the things that belong to your personal salvation will be regarded with a sullen indifference. God will say, "He is joined to his idols, let him alone;" and of all the calamities that can happen to the soul on this side of perdition, to be let alone is the most terrible.

When the benevolent monks who reside on the Alps go out amid the snow storm to search for travelers who, overcome by fatigue and cold, have sunk down to perish, they always know when they come to a person whose case is hopeless, from the fact that he is very hard to awake, and when they do get him partially aroused, he is very *angry* at being disturbed, and insists on being allowed to remain where he is. So is it with those Gospel-hardened sinners who have long resisted the Spirit, and whose souls are bound up in the chains of a mighty lethargy. When a revival sweeps through a whole community, and enters the very house where such a man lives, he slumbers on in indifference, or else becomes a deadly opposer. He even glories in his shame, and boasts of *how calm* he can keep amid the general excitement.

But the calm he boasts of is like that fearful calm we sometimes see in nature, when a storm is brewing in the heavens, and is about to break forth in desolating power. It is the calm which the sick man feels, when the inflammation that tortures his body has turned into mortification. He thinks himself better, his friends congratulate him on his improvement; but the physician looks gloomy, for he knows that soon his heart will be struggling wildly under the attack of death. So the sinner has resisted the Spirit, till his convictions have all left him, and he cries, "peace and safety," when destruction is thundering at his door.

The great sin that the Spirit comes to convince of, is the sin of UNBELIEF. The Lord's own words are, "When he is come, he shall reprove the world of sin; of sin, because they believe not in me." It was not enough that Jesus died for the guilty, and made salvation free as the air we breathe, or as the mountain torrent, leaping from rock to rock, for such is the deep de-

pravity of the human heart, that not one of the whole race would have believed in this boundless love, did not the Holy Spirit come to convince of unbelief. I know of nothing that shows more clearly the extent of our undone and lost state by nature than this,—that it needed not only God in our nature to die for us, but it needs God the Spirit, to convince us that we need such a Saviour at all.

The proper definition of unbelief, as given by the Bible, is truly fearful. It is there described as making God a liar. Reader, suppose that you were to have your veracity doubted by all around you, day after day; that your family, your neighbors, the persons with whom you do business every day, all were to turn away from your words as unworthy of belief,—how bitterly would you feel! What indignation would fill your heart! And how must the Great God feel, when the very creatures for whom he has done so much—for whom he has made infinite sacrifices—refuse to credit his words, and cast them back in his face with contempt! Is it any wonder that the unalterable decree has gone forth from the Eternal Throne, “He that believeth **not** shall be damned”?

But it is not often that unbelief will, in words, contradict God. Occasionally some bold blasphemer may dare to do this, but, generally, the unbelief of the heart will assume a more pious, and, therefore, a *more dangerous* form. As Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, so the sin of unbelief will often come in the garb of the most profound humility. It will say, “I am too great a sinner for Christ to pardon me.” This is a sham humility, and has its origin in an “evil heart of unbelief, departing from the living God.”

Suppose that the Mayor of this city were to issue a proclamation, calling upon *all* the destitute poor of the place, to come to his office, and they would get bread freely, “without money and without price.” But, suppose, on that very day, in passing along the street, that I see a man weeping bitterly, who, upon my asking him the cause of his distress, informs me he is in a starving state. I point him to the proclamation, and show him the office where he can get immediate relief. But he says, “I

am too hungry to get anything; the proclamation cannot mean those who are so hungry as I am!" Why, we would think the man was mad if we heard him speak in this style. We would tell him that his hunger and destitution formed his only qualification for coming.

And this is what the Spirit seeks to impress upon the mind of the awakened sinner. He tells him that his sins, which he is making a reason for staying away from Christ, are his only qualifications for coming to him. An awakened sinner was once bewailing his sins in the presence of Lady Huntington, and at last, in the bitterness of his soul, cried out, "I am lost." "I am glad to hear it," said the pious lady. "What," said he, "glad to hear that I am lost?" "Yes," was the reply, "for Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost." The Holy Spirit took that word and applied it to his heart; he saw that the cause of his despondency was unbelief; and he there and then received Christ by faith, "and went on his way rejoicing."

Another reason why the Spirit seeks to convince of unbelief is that this is the damning sin, and the cause of every other sin. Why is this man a swearer, a drunkard, a Sabbath-breaker, or an open transgressor of the law of God? It is because he has not believed with the heart on the Son of God. The moment the soul so believes, "faith works by love, and purifies the heart." The Spirit of God does not seek to induce the sinner to cut off this outward sin, and another outward sin, leaving the great root of all sin in the heart untouched.

This would be like a man who wanted to cut down a tree, and would begin with his knife at the top branches, and so work his way down, instead of laying the axe to the root of the tree at once. The Spirit lays the axe of Christ's truth to the root of the tree of unbelief, and at once the man becomes "a new creature in Christ Jesus." The principle of love to him who died for him, becomes the controlling and impelling motive. He works, not *for* life, but because he *has* life. Heaven is not merely *before* him, it is *within* him.

Remember, then, my reader, that, whatever may be your convictions and your terrors,—whatever may be the number of your

prayers, tears, and good resolutions,—until you come to Jesus, and cast yourself wholly on him, you are resisting the Spirit, you are in a state of unbelief, and exposed, at any moment, to be called into the presence of that God, who has pronounced such a fearful sentence against this sin.

“ Dwell, Spirit, in our hearts,  
Our minds from bondage free ;  
Then shall we know, and praise, and love  
The Father, Son, and Thee.”



## CHAPTER V.

### SAVING FAITH.

Faith in Jesus is essential to eternal life. There are many important truths in the Bible that a man can be saved without knowing. He may get to heaven without being a Presbyterian, a Methodist, or a Baptist, but heaven's gates will be forever barred against him, if he dies without faith in Jesus. This is not *a* way of being saved, it is *the* way. All that makes heaven happy, all that makes hell miserable, depends on our reception or rejection of this truth.

A man may say he will have nothing to do with this truth, but it will have something to do with him. He may assume the position of a proud neutrality, but Jesus declares such neutrality impossible. "He that is not with me is against me." The death of Jesus throws the soul of man, in spite of himself, upon a new probation. It is his only hope, his only way of escape from the ruin in which he is involved. The Gospel meets him as he lands upon the shores of time, and it must prove to him "the Saviour of life or of death." It will leave him amid the unsullied brightness of heaven, or amid the hopeless misery of the lost.

In the Bible things are made plain just in proportion as they are of vital importance. Things deeply mysterious and hard be understood, are to be found in that holy Book; but the plan of salvation is not one of them. Indeed, it is so simple and plain, that thousands are stumbling to hell over its very simplicity. Instead of believing in the death of the Son of God, as a ground of justification and eternal life, they are looking for some mysterious influence to come down from heaven, operating upon them like an electrical shock, and filling them with unspeakable rapture. They are waiting for some wonderful light to break in upon their dark minds, and some mysterious voice to tell them that they are forgiven.

Now faith in Jesus is, not merely to believe that he is the Son of God; that he has died to save sinners; that he has made a perfect atonement for the guilty; that he is able and willing to save all who come unto him; and that there is efficiency in his blood to cleanse from all sin. A man may believe all this, just as the devil believes it all, and yet remain unsaved. It may only be the assent of the intellect to perceived truth. The mind may be convinced of the creditability of God's testimony, and yet that testimony exert no saving influence on the heart.

But when a man really comes to Jesus, he casts himself upon his merits as a poor, lost, undone sinner; conscious that he can do nothing to save himself, or to improve his condition before him; and trusting wholly to his work on the cross for his acceptance with the Father. True faith makes a close, personal matter of the death of Jesus. It says, "He died not only for sinners but for *me*, the chief of sinners." It says, "In myself I am nothing, but Jesus died for my sins; and through his righteousness I know I am accepted." It takes God at his word. It sets before its eyes the awful scene on Calvary, the sinking head, the gushing blood, the open wounds, the dying words of the Son of God; and it remembers that with that Son and his work the Father is well pleased, and through his finished work can be "just and yet the justifier of the ungodly."

The man who thus believes in Jesus, *knows* he is forgiven; not because he has been told it in a dream, nor because it has been whispered to his soul by some mysterious voice, nor flashed upon his mind by some sudden impression; but simply because God says it. To trust to my own impressions and feelings and emotions is sheer fanaticism; but to trust to the testimony of God concerning his Son, is highly rational. It is to be able to give a *reason* of the hope that is in us. And surely there can be no firmer foundation upon which an immortal soul can rest its hopes than the word of that God who cannot lie.

Suppose you had offended some dear friend by your bad conduct, and that the sense of that friend's displeasure had become very grievous to you—a burden you could no longer bear. At last you go to that friend, confess your fault and ask

his forgiveness; and he says, "I freely forgive you." In this case, how could you know you were really forgiven? How could you have an assurance that he was no longer displeased with you? Would it be by waiting for some inward impression, or some outward voice or some startling light? No: it would be by simply believing your friend's word.

So it is with faith in Jesus: it rests entirely upon the merits of Christ's precious blood, and knows that pardon has been bestowed, because God has said, "He that believeth shall be saved." No angel has come from heaven to tell him that his sins have been blotted out, and that his name is now entered in the Lamb's book of life; but he rests upon a testimony better than that of all the angels in heaven, even the testimony of the "Faithful true Witness." "He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." We know what it is to put our name and seal to a written document. It is to ratify it, and declare our determination to abide by its contents. So faith rests sweetly upon the work of Christ and upon the word of God, and knows that there is to be found peace and assurance forever.

The great mistake that many make when inquiring after salvation, is, to refuse to come *as they are* to Jesus. They think that they must wait for deeper conviction, for more feeling, for more love to Christ before they can come to him. Hence they keep looking at their own hearts to see if any good feeling is springing up there, which might form a ground of encouragement that they were becoming more fit for going to Christ. The Bible says, "Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound." That joyful sound comes only from Calvary. It comes from the pale lips of Jesus, quivering in death, as he says, "It is finished." But the awakened sinner listens at the door of his heart, to hear the joyful sound come from there. But from there it never will come. There is in that heart no good thing, and no voice but that of condemnation will ever come from it.

Take a Scriptural illustration. The children of Israel had fiery flying serpents sent among them, the sting of which was

deadly. The people were dying, on the right hand and on the left. God commanded a brazen serpent to be lifted up in sight of the perishing, assuring them that whosoever looked in faith would be instantly cured. Here is a man who has been wounded, and is in a dying state. His friends have taken him out in sight of the saving object, and urge and entreat him to look and be saved. Instead, however, of looking at the brazen serpent, he keeps looking at his wound. He keeps telling of its painfulness, of the increase of bad symptoms, and bitterly bewailing his miserable state. Would his looking at, and talking about his malady save him? No: he would die under the very shadow of the object of salvation; not because there was no saving power in it, but because he would not do what God commanded,—look at the brazen serpent, instead of at himself.

Dear reader, Jesus says, “Look unto me, and be ye saved.” But you say, “I cannot go to Jesus with such a hard heart. I have too little feeling, and must wait till I can get more conviction of sin.” All this arises from the pride of self-righteousness of your heart. Suppose that you could feel that your heart was growing better, that you *had* more feeling, and that upon making this discovery, that you were to begin to rejoice; what would this be but rejoicing in yourself instead of in Christ? It would only be making a Saviour of your feelings, your emotions, your penitence, instead of the heaven-appointed Saviour.

And this is one great reason why the religion of many professors of the present day is so fitful and unreliable. They live by feeling, and our feelings are as changeable as the veering winds. Hence no dependence can be placed in such professors. They are either in the raptures of excitement or sun<sup>1</sup> down into the stupor of indifference. When they feel well they will do well.

Their religion is not like the peaceful river, rolling calmly on, day after day the same, but it is like the mountain torrent, caused by heavy rain that comes foaming madly down, but in the dry season, when it is most wanted, is nowhere to be found. It is not like the steady light of the sun, brighter and brighter to the perfect day; but it is like the glare of the lightning,

which, on a dark night, dazzles your eyes with the sudden illumination of earth and skies, and then leaves you to plod on in greater darkness than before.

True faith trusts in Jesus alone, and as he is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever," its confidence is not destroyed by change of feeling. On that terrible night, when "the angel of death spread his wings on the blast," and breathed destruction upon the first born in the Egyptian families, the Israelites were saved by simply obeying the word of the Lord, and sprinkling the door-posts with blood. They did not need to bar or barricade their doors to keep the destroyer out. It was not necessary to sit up all night, clasping the first born in their arms, or sending up fervent prayers that he might be spared to them. No: if they believed the word of the Lord, and *did what that word required*, they could go to bed and sleep calmly and sweetly under the protection of blood.

So with the believer in Jesus; he is under the protection of the precious blood of Christ, and he knows that his soul is safe in the keeping of infinite love. If the Israelite's faith in God's word, and in the protecting power of the blood, began to fail, he would at once be thrown into an agony of fear and doubt; and as the critical hour approached, and as he heard the first wild, despairing cry from the home of his neighbor that the destroyer had visited, he would be apt to resort to all kinds of expedients of his *own devising*, for the protection of the loved one. If he had steady faith, however, in *God's remedy*, no doubt would disturb the calm repose of his soul.

An old writer says, "Faith will be staggered even by loose stones in the way if we look manward; if we look Godward, faith will not be staggered with inaccessible mountains stretching across and obstructing apparently our onward progress. 'Go forward,' is the voice from heaven; and faith obeying, finds the mountains before it flat as plains. How strong is faith when it comes fresh from the fountain of redeeming love!" Another old writer says, "For every one look you give at your own evil heart, give fifty at Christ."

This waiting for joy and peace, and love to spring up in

our hearts before we believe in Jesus, is as unphilosophical as it is unscriptural. We cannot produce emotions by trying to feel. Suppose I were to say, "I will now begin and feel sorry;" I could not feel sorry by mere trying. But let me fix my mind upon some sorrowful subject,—on my mother on her death-bed, and her pale and quivering lips, giving me her dying charge; and the emotion of sorrow will spring up without my trying to produce it. If I say, "I will now begin and feel joyful," I cannot produce that emotion by any direct effort. But let me fix my mind upon some joyful fact, and at once my heart will be filled with real gladness.

So let the sinner look to Jesus, as he utters the deep death groan that rends his bleeding heart; and let him believe that all this suffering, all this boundless love was for him, and as one says, "he must be more or less than a man," if it does not melt him down into penitence and love. Hence the Bible tells us that "faith worketh by love and purifies the heart." To expect good emotions before faith in Jesus, is to expect the effect before the cause.

"Let no sense of guilt prevent you ;  
Nor of fitness fondly dream :  
All the fitness he requireth  
Is to feel your need of him."

## CHAPTER VI.

### OBSCURING CLOUDS.

It has been the experience of all who have had the happiness to be taught in the school of Christ, that they have had more difficulty in *unlearning* than in learning. The prejudices engendered by an erroneous religious training; the opinions of men of high standing, and of eminent piety; the writings of great men, with whose fame the world has resounded; a blind attachment to the church of our fathers, however far that church may be from the truth; and a whole bundle of preconceived notions in regard to religion, which have no foundation in the Bible;—these all stand in our way, as mountain barriers to the reception of “the truth as it is in Jesus.”

It is truly melancholy to think of the influence that prejudice will exert on the human mind on the subject of all others the most important—salvation. It spreads the darkness of midnight over the understanding, twists and distorts all our modes of reasoning and thinking, and leaves its own horrid impress upon all our conclusions. It leads men to read the Word of God, not to discover truth for themselves, but to find something to sustain their own favorite theories. These theories are often so absurd, that the letting in of a little common sense upon them, would be enough to dispel them, as the mist is dispelled by the rising glories of the sun.

It has been truly said, that you cannot reason a man out of a thing that he has never been reasoned into; and the only cure for this unhappy state of mind is to come to the Bible as to the foundation of truth, saying, “Lord, what I know not teach thou me.” When the voice of prejudice exclaimed, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth,” the happy convert who had just found the Saviour himself, and whose soul was glowing with desire for the salvation of his friend, had too much wisdom to sit

down and enter into an argument about the matter. Had I done so he would in all probability have lost his temper, and have done more harm than good ; but there was holy power in the kind reply, "Come and see."

There is the greatest difference among men as to the reception of gospel truth. Some receive the truth the first time they hear it. With the rapidity of lightning, conviction of their lost state flashes upon their minds, and at once they go to Jesus for pardon. They can tell the day and the very hour when they were converted. A large portion of the conversions recorded in the New Testament are of this character.

But with many who are truly the Lord's children, it is quite different. The light of the gospel broke upon their minds gradually as the dawning of the day. They can tell of no sudden terrors, no appalling alarms, no powerful convictions, hurrying them on to the verge of despair, and shaking their souls over the fiery gulf. Said one, "The Lord awoke me as the mother awakes her babe—*with a kiss*." Neither can such persons tell much of great raptures and ecstatic joys in their conversion. That the truth as it is in Jesus, in its full-orbed grandeur has arisen upon their souls, there can be no doubt. That Christ is unspeakably precious to their souls they *know*, and there is no hesitation in the tone with which they say, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, I now see;" yet they cannot fix the very day when this great change took place. They often write bitter things against themselves on this account, and fear that they have never been converted at all. But let such remember that to be *in Christ* is the essential thing : the way in which we have reached that place of safety is of little moment.

When the floodgates of heaven were opened, and a wild deluge was about to sweep the globe of its guilty inhabitants, to be *in* the Ark was to be safe, whether the Ark had been reached by a few rapid bounds, or by slow and halting steps. So to be able to say, "I have found him whom my soul loveth," is of vastly more importance than to be able to relate an experience full of thrilling alternations of feeling, and with dates as correct as the revolutions of the earth.



One great reason why many are kept from accepting salvation by faith in Jesus is preconceived and erroneous opinions as to what religion truly is. They have arranged in their minds what they must do, and how they must feel, if they ever become Christians. They have marked out a process in their own minds through which they suppose they must go,—a process composed of weeks or months of gloom and terror of soul, of bitter tears and agonizing prayers, followed by a sudden gush of joy; the whole process being as distinctly marked as the various stages of an intermittent fever. They think that when all these emotions have been experienced, God will be changed in his feelings toward them; that then his anger will be turned away from them; and that, in consideration of the great change that has taken place upon them, he will forgive their past offences and love them freely. Tell them that all this attempt to change God, and to make themselves more acceptable to him by efforts of their own, is not only foolishness, but wickedness; that it is repudiating God's plan of saving them, and daring to substitute one of their own; that no change needs to be effected in God, he having already so loved them as to give His Son to die for them; that there is now absolutely nothing between them and pardon and justification, but to believe in the perfect satisfaction which Jesus has made to a broken and an insulted law;—tell them all this, I say, and you do great violence to the notions and feelings that have been made strong by the culture and indulgence of years.

The state of mind described is well illustrated by the case of Naaman, the Syrian, (see 2 Kings, 5.) This man had a dangerous and loathsome disease, which cast a dark shadow over his life. The good news reached his ears that there was a man of God in the land of Israel who could cure him; and he at once started upon his journey, surrounded with all that pomp and grandeur which his wealth enabled him to command. As he draws near to the residence of the man of God, he arranges in his own mind the whole method of his cure. He already in imagination sees the prophet hastening to meet him, and, moving his hand over the diseased place, lift up his eyes to heaven

and invoke the Almighty aid, when suddenly his whole frame thrills under the consciousness of a perfect cure.

This was Naaman's plan, but it was not God's. The simple message is sent to him, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thou shalt be clean." What a severe blow to the man's preconceived notions! The scowl of displeasure is on his brow, and indignation is in his heart, because God will not carry out his prepared programme. God's way of cure was too simple a way, and too humbling to his pride. But at last, through the persuasions of love, he went and did what the Lord commanded; and at once he was made whole.

So, my dear reader, cast away your own notions and prejudices; cast from you with a noble scorn the self-righteous pride that would lead you to question the wisdom of God's way of saving you; and this hour salvation shall come to thy heart.

See that poor diseased woman, in the days of our Lord, pressing her way through the crowd, that she may touch the hem of his garment. See how pale, and weak, and helpless she is, in herself. The crowd, surging and swaying to and fro, sometimes carry her far from the object of her hope. But she does not give up. She does not say, "What can such a poor, weak invalid as I am, do?" She does not sit down and philosophize about the likelihood of a mere touch of the hem of the Lord's garment doing her any good. She presses her way forward, and at last her trembling hand just touches his garment; and at once her bent and shriveled form expands into health and vigor. Our Lord instantly looked round, and inquired who had touched him. There were many crowding and pressing upon him, but he knew that one believing soul, in particular, had touched him with the hand of faith. He felt that healing power had gone forth from him to some believing heart.

Reader, that blessed Saviour is near you while you are reading these lines. You need not ascend to the heights to bring him down, nor descend into the depths to bring him up; you need not go to the uttermost ends of the earth in pursuit of him; you need not wait to find him at protracted meetings, or penitential seats, though many have found him there. He is nigh you

this moment, yea, in your heart, if you but believe his word. There is but the vail of unbelief between you and him this moment, and let that be torn away, and the peace of heaven will pervade your heart as you cry, "My Lord, and my God!"

It not unfrequently happens, that, after the plan of salvation has been presented in the plainest way, we are met by the assertion, "I cannot believe." Now, this is an assertion which plainly contradicts your Maker to his face. The Lord who made you must know what you can and what you cannot do; and the very fact that he commands you to believe, and threatens you with eternal punishment for not believing, is the highest evidence that you can do it.

Jesus says, "*Ye will not* come unto me, that ye might have life;" and you have the boldness to say to that Saviour, "*I cannot* come unto thee." Suppose, for example, that a man has insulted his best friend, and, when urged to go and confess his fault, and ask his friend's forgiveness, he says, "I cannot do it." What does he mean by that "cannot?" Does he mean that his limbs have become paralyzed, so that he cannot go to his friend's house? No. Does he mean that he has lost the power of speech, so that he cannot ask the injured man's forgiveness? No. The meaning of his "cannot," is, that he has such an obstinate, bad temper that he *will not* do it. The perverse pride of his heart is such, that he will not do what the voice of God above him and the voice of conscience within him, alike declare to be his imperative duty.

It is so with the sinner. He is going about with a great deal of zeal to establish for himself a righteousness, but he will not *submit* himself to the righteousness of Christ. He thinks himself very humble, very broken-hearted and contrite; he declares his willingness to do any thing required of him. Ask him to stand up in public meeting and express his desire for the prayers of God's people, and he will promptly do it. Ask him to attend inquiry meeting, and he will do that. Ask him to go home and pray and read his Bible, and his compliance is prompt. But there is one thing he *will not* do: He will not do the very *first* thing that his God requires of him; that is, to be-

lieve in Jesus. He says he has repented of sin, and declares readiness to give up every sin; but the very first sin the Spirit points out he refuses to abandon; that is, the sin of unbelief.

He is like a man who has a broken limb. The physician is called in, and the man professes to be willing that his medical attendant should handle the limb in whatever way may be necessary. The hand of skill passes along the limb, pressing here and there, till at last it rests upon the injured part, when the patient starts, and exclaims, "Ah, Doctor, you must not touch there!" "Yes, but," says the doctor, "that is the very place to be touched, and if you will not let me touch *that*, there is no use of my staying here."

So, sinner, the Spirit of God pours a whole flood of light on the sin of unbelief, and points that out as the murderer of your soul; and you not only refuse to give it up, but speak as if you *could not* give it up, and as if your God had laid you under the absolute necessity of calling him a liar! Oh! do you not see that there is an unfathomed depth of pride in your heart, that is keeping you from Jesus? If you are willing to be saved, the Saviour is willing, and what, then, is to hinder the lost from being found? No more precious blood was shed for John, or for Peter, or for Paul, than has been shed for you; and if ever you are saved at all, you must be saved as they were—by the application of that blood to your own soul by faith. There is no reason on God's part why you should not this moment be saved. Any barriers that remain are of your own putting up, and keeping up. Throw open the door of your heart, and invite the blessed Lord to come in.

" Ye ransomed of Jesus,  
Come sing of his love,  
He stooped down to raise us  
To mansions above :

Jehovah on him our transgressions did lay,  
And he bore the huge burden, and bore it away."

## CHAPTER VII.

### MIGHTY TO SAVE.

Souls fleeing from the wrath to come often need *strong consolation*. It has been observed that Satan will do what he can to keep a man from becoming a Christian at all ; but, if he cannot succeed in this, he will try, by doubts and fears, to make him as *miserable* a Christian as possible. And so this enemy of souls tries first to lull souls asleep, in a presumptuous security. By false representations of the general mercy of God, by perverted views of the nature of sin, and by preaching from the old, popular, and pleasing text, "Thou shalt not surely die," he will try to keep all thoughts of coming wrath from disturbing your soul.

But, if in this he cannot succeed, if no species of hellish logic can keep the soul from concern about its state before God, then the "father of lies" will try to persuade the sinner that there is no salvation for him. Hence you will see the same man, in the course of a few hours, rush from the extreme of presumption to that of despair. Formerly he could not be made to fear, now he cannot be made to hope. To such I would especially address myself in the following remarks.

Such persons are just as much in the service of the devil in their present state of mind as they ever were. They may go to the house of God, may attend inquiry meeting, may converse with religious people freely, and appear to be more religious than they ever were before ; but they are still believing Satan's lie, in opposition to God's truth : they are intrenched in unbelief, under the influence of which, they refuse to trust the imperishable word of the God of truth, and cast back the precious promises in the face of the Eternal.

There are two great truths which stand out on the pages of the Bible so plain that he that runneth may read them. The

one is, that if any sinner is ever saved, God's will be all the glory; the other is, that if any sinner is ever lost, the sinner's will be all the blame. These two truths God has joined together, and let no man dare to put them asunder. We may talk about God's sovereignty, and man's free agency, about liberty and necessity, until both ourselves and our hearers become lost in the thick metaphysical fog of our own raising; but, thank God, when we emerge from out of the thick darkness of our own creating, we see these two truths in the Word of Life, shining out gloriously,—lights in a dark place, to which we do well that we take heed.

God has been at infinite pains to convince the sinner that he has no pleasure in his death, and casts the whole responsibility of his soul's eternal state upon himself. As if to set this matter forever at rest, and forever to shut the mouth of unbelief, the Eternal God, in infinite condescension, comes before the assembled world of his own guilty creatures, and swears by his own Being, not only that he has no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but that he has a contrary pleasure—a pleasure in their conversion. Now, it is said that among men, “an oath of confirmation is an end of all strife;” but it seems that between the sinner and God it is not the end of all strife; but that the sinner, after refusing to believe the *word* of God, will go on to doubt his very *oath*! O, how deep and damning is the sin of unbelief!

The doctrine that God honestly and earnestly desires the salvation of the sinner is everywhere taught in the Bible, and in the strongest terms. 2 Tim. 2: 4—“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” 2 Peter, 3: 9—“Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” Many other passages might be quoted to show how earnestly God longs for the salvation of the greatest sinner, and that when the sinner perishes, it is not because there is no love for him in the heart of God, not because the blood of Jesus has not been shed for him, not because that blood, so efficacious to save others, has no power to save

him ; but simply because he persistently refuses to be saved by God's appointed method, faith in the death and righteousness of the Lord Jesus.

If God is a holy God, as is universally acknowledged, then he must desire to see all holy ; and, as an evidence of this, when a little of God's own Spirit takes possession of any man, from that moment he begins intensely to long and pray for the salvation of all. Now, if a very little of God's Spirit in the heart of a Christian makes him desire the salvation of all men, does the Spirit itself only desire the salvation of a few ? Ask any good man, when the spirit of prayer is imparted to him, how many perishing sinners he desires to be saved, and he will at once exclaim, " O that all my Saviour knew."

Now, that desire did not come naturally from himself, neither did it come from the prince of darkness, but is in his possession because he has been made " partaker of the Divine nature," because the mind that was in Christ is in him. In short, the fervent longing of the believer for the salvation of the world, which shows itself in tears, in prayers, and in untiring efforts, is but the echo of that voice that comes from the eternal throne, " As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but rather that he would turn unto me and live."

As an unanswerable proof that these were God's feelings toward a perishing world, when he gave his beloved Son, he sent a company of holy angels to announce the errand on which he came, not as a Saviour for a few, but for all. " Fear not ; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Now, if Jesus did not die for all, if salvation is not free to all, the Gospel could not be glad tidings to any of us.

Suppose that a number of persons are confined in prison under sentence of death. One night the door of their cell is thrown open, and a messenger from the Governor enters, saying, " Cheer up, my friends, I have good news for you." They would all expect to hear something that would make them happy. Every eye is fixed upon the face of the messenger, and the interest is intense, when he breaks the deep silence once

more by saying, "There is pardon and deliverance for *some* of you." This would not really be good news to any of them; it would not really make any of them happy; but, as they could not know who the favored ones were, would cast them back into greater suspense and anxiety than before. But if a free pardon is offered to all without exception, it can truly be called good news whether it is received or not. Some might be too proud to accept of it, and others might think they could save themselves in some other way than by accepting an offer of free grace: nevertheless, the message itself was glad tidings, and was for all the condemned.

Our adorable Redeemer must have known what was the nature of his mission, and whether the work that he undertook was for the whole race, or only for a part. And, accordingly, his account of it is, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." Sinner, there are two words here that take you in, however great may have been your sins. God loved the *world*: you are one of the world; therefore, God so loved *you* as to give his son to die for *you*. The word "whosoever," also includes you. It includes the whole world who will believe in him whose blood cleanseth from *all* sin.

Indeed, had the death of our Lord Jesus not been for all, and had his love not gone out equally to all, it could not be said of him that he kept the law, that he magnified the law, and made it honorable. The law required him not only to love God with all his soul, but *his neighbor as himself*. In taking upon him our nature he became the neighbor of every man, according to his own definition of neighbor, as given in the parable of the good Samaritan. Had his love then been only a partial love, had it taken in only one portion of the race, and rejected the other, he would not have been a perfect Saviour.

But, as facts sometimes strike the mind more forcibly than arguments, permit me to turn the reader's attention to a few facts, which show the Lord Jesus as mighty to save the vilest of transgressors. One day the Lord was on a visit to Capernaum, and was invited to dinner at the house of a Pharisee. While



he sat at table, a woman, whose past life had been stained by sins of deepest dye, came into the room where he was. She had doubtless been listening to his soul-searching preaching, which had fastened conviction of her lost condition upon her, and made the whole of her past life pass in terrible review before her affrighted spirit. She began to wash our Lord's feet with her tears of penitence, and to wipe them with her hair; and, to show the fullness of her grateful heart, regardless of expense, she began to anoint him with a very costly oil.

The Pharisee was dreadfully shocked at such things being allowed in his house, and his proud heart swelled with indignation as he said within himself, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known what manner of woman this is, for she is a sinner." Poor, spiritually-blind mortal! Well did the blessed Redeemer know who she was, and all about her past life; but he also knew the deep repentance and the strong faith which filled her heart, and, turning to her, after administering a keen rebuke to the Pharisee, he said, "Thy faith hath saved thee."

But we come to a still more notable case. Jesus is on the cross in the midst of mortal agonies. The hour of darkness now has come, and the curse due to guilty sinners is fallen upon his holy head. Around him a perfect tempest of passion is raging, and the very creatures for whose guilt he is suffering are blaspheming him with a thousand tongues. And, worse than all the pains that racked his body, worse than the ravings of blasphemy at the foot of the cross, the light of his Father's smiles, in which he had from all eternity rejoiced, is now withdrawn, and the dismal gloom which falls upon the earth, is but a faint emblem of the darkness that covered his holy mind, as he exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!"

Yet, even in that terrible hour, he did not forget to labor for the souls of the perishing. To his two fellow sufferers he doubtless preached the doctrines of the Kingdom, and one of them receives the truth and is saved. He was suffering punishment as a thief, as one who had violated the laws both of God and man; but his past sins formed no barrier to Christ receiving him. He had no good works to present, on the ground of which he could

claim acceptance with God, and, blessed be God, they were not needed! He found the blood of Jesus a sufficient plea for his justification, and his righteousness an ample covering for his naked soul.

He was a bad man, who had been so hardened in sin that even his fellow-men could endure him no longer, but were determined to rid the earth of his vile presence, by pushing him before the bar of God; but in the last hour of his wasted life he believed in Jesus, and that moment his past guilt was all forgiven, and the promise of eternal life, from the lips of Jesus, fell upon his dying ear. O sinner, why stay away one hour longer from such a Saviour, who will in no wise cast out any that come unto him?

We have thus seen what were the terms upon which Jesus received sinners in the days of his flesh; but he is no longer on earth, and the question occurs, is he the same still? We are so liable to change, ourselves, and are surrounded with so many changes, that we are apt to suspect some change in the Friend of sinners. But the word of God assures us that He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever;" and, as a proof of it, we see him receiving the chief of sinners after his glorious ascension.

Shortly after he went to his throne in glory, a young man of finished education, and of splendid powers of mind, commenced a course of opposition to the Lord's cause. Possessed of great energy of character, and of an impetuous spirit, that never did anything by halves, he persecuted to death the followers of Jesus, and, to use his own words, was "exceeding mad against them." As he went on in his career of blasphemy and of blood, the eye of the Saviour looked down upon him, a witness of all the dark passions that filled his heart.

And did that eye flash with the fires of wrath? Did a red thunderbolt leap from the hands of the Lord, to dash this rebel wretch to pieces? No: the eye that once swam in tears for him, still pitied him; the hand that was once nailed to the cross for him, was kindly stretched out to pluck him from destruction; his blasphemies were turned into prayers; his hatred of Christ and his people, into love; and, thirty years after, upon a calm

review of the whole scene on the road to Damascus, he says, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom *I am chief.*"

Reader, will you now believe? I have no means of knowing how great a sinner you have been; but, in the name of Jesus, I bid you welcome to a Saviour "mighty to save." The terms of Solomon's pardon to Adonijah were, "If he will show himself worthy." But Christ's offer of pardon is burdened with no such *if*. He receives the unworthy who believe in him, and through his worthiness makes them worthy. His name is Jesus because he saves from sin. An old writer says—"There is majesty in the name, God. There is independent being in the name, Jehovah. There is unction in the name, Christ. There is friendship in the word, Immanuel. There is help in the name, Advocate. But there is salvation only in the name, JESUS."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### PEACE WITH GOD.

The most valuable blessing that man can enjoy on earth is peace with God. When the blessed Redeemer was about to bid his disciples farewell, and they stood around him in speechless sorrow, this was the gift which he singled out, above all others, to bestow upon them as his parting legacy. He was Lord of all, and had the whole universe out of which to choose a gift for them in that hour of parting tenderness; and the gift which he fixed upon as the most precious to them in their hour of need, was, peace with God. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you."

Observe, the Saviour does not say that he will give the believer *a peace*. The world can do that. The false hope, that maketh ashamed, can do that. But he promised to give his own peace—the same untroubled calm that dwelt in his own bosom from all eternity. Before you could make an animal happy with man's happiness, you would have to give it man's nature; and before the soul can be made happy with God's peace, it must first be made a partaker of God's nature. This is done when the soul believes in Jesus, and casts itself unreservedly upon his promises. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these we might be *partakers of the divine nature*." Man lost his happiness when he lost the image of God upon his soul; and he can never be happy till that image is restored. No outward surrounding can make him happy, while he has no peace with God.

Why was Adam unhappy after he became a sinner? He was still in paradise, with all its scenes of surpassing loveliness. The heavens were as bright above him, and the earth as beautiful around him as before; and yet, he is now seen trembling with guilty terror, and seeking to hide himself from the pres-

ence of his God. The reason is that sin has entered his soul, and, instead of peace, there is misery and internal discord. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

You might place a sinner in a palace, and ransack the four quarters of the globe, to find objects to administer to his pleasures. The voices of applauding thousands might shout his praise. A crowd of flatterers might bow at his nod; but sin reigning in his heart would convert all into the misery of hell. It would make his sweetest music harsh and discordant as the groans of the damned. It would make his soul turbulent as the heavings of the burning lake, and send out from his heart the cry, "All is vanity and vexation of Spirit."

Almost every good thing in this world has its counterfeit, and so it is with peace with God. The prophet Jeremiah tells of some in his day who cried, "peace, peace, when there was *no peace*." The prophet was bitterly weeping over their lost condition, but they had not one tear to shed for themselves. He saw all the extent of their tremendous peril, but no fear disturbed their deadly stupor. Such persons fondly suppose that all is right with them, while all is wrong. They are spiritual bankrupts, while they think themselves "rich and increased in goods."

Perhaps there was a time when deep conviction of sin shook their souls to their very centre. The terrors of the Lord, and the powers of the world to come, made them afraid. Their feelings were excited to the highest pitch of human endurance. They longed for peace and comfort to come to them from some quarter. Now, in the very nature of things, the sinner will not remain long in this state. If he does not go at once to Jesus, and become possessor of true peace, he will go back into a callous indifference on the subject of religion, or else settle down upon some false hope.

It is a law of all nature that whatever is violent cannot be lasting. When we see a very violent storm, we know that it will not last long. The violent disease soon exhausts itself or the patient. The grief that is furious and clamorous over the grave of a friend, seldom lasts long. So, when the mind is deeply moved to sorrow and alarm on the subject of religion,

it is according to the philosophy of mind that there will be a reaction, that a calm will ensue; and the great danger is, unless the mind is faithfully dealt with, that this calm will be mistaken for the peace of God.

That this is the case with thousands of professing Christians, is evident from the fact that they can give no scriptural and intelligent reason for the hope that is in them. That they felt *very bad*, and that after a time they *felt better*, is about the sum total of their religious experience. As to *how* a just and holy God can forgive them, without dishonoring his law, and compromising his truth, they can give you no scriptural account; and if they attempt to direct an anxious sinner as to what he shall do to be saved, they at once exhibit the spectacle of "the blind leading the blind."

Their religion being founded upon *feeling*, not *principle*, soon settles down into a heartless form; and should the truth of God, at any time, startle their slumbering souls into alarm that all is not right with them, they immediately find comfort by falling back on their religious experience, living in the remote past. There is no class of a minister's hearers so hard to be reached by divine truth, as those who have thus pillowed their head upon a false peace. He may preach the most faithful and powerful discourses, leaping warm from a heart filled with intense solicitude for the perishing. He may expose the danger of self-deceivers with a clearness and fidelity that will sometimes alarm the true saints of God; for, as an old writer says: "It is hard to drive the dogs out without making the children cry;" but the deluded soul clutches with a tighter grasp the huge falsehood with which it is descending to perdition.

O! Dear Reader, look well to the foundation of your peace. If you make a mistake in your daily business, it may be corrected and no great harm done. If, in the erection of a house, the construction of a machine, or the solving of a difficult problem, you make a mistake, the ground may be gone over again, and all be made right; but if you die wrong, it is an eternal mistake! There is no coming back from the land of despair, to correct mistakes made with reference to salvation: but with

the day of grace ended, every rill of mercy dried up, the light of hope quenched in darkness, and insulted justice inflicting upon the soul its avenging strokes, eternity will be filled up with the doleful lamentation, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved."

This peace is the only real support amid the trials and sorrows of life. Earth has no ill for which Jesus has not a cure. The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and we are sometimes called to pass through afflictions in which the tenderest human sympathy can do us no good. Human comforters may administer temporary relief, like a stupefying opiate given to the pain-racked sufferer, but Jesus can give a peace lasting as eternity.

Many are the remedies proposed for the sorrows of life. Here is one who, under the deep afflictions of his lot, frets, and murmurs, and complains, and makes himself and all around him miserable, by pouring out his unavailable complaints. Here is another, who sits down under his trials with a hardened indifference, submitting to the lashes of a something that he calls fate, and sullenly declaring that he must bear what he cannot help. Of such ways of finding comfort, it may be said, as of Job's friends, "Miserable comforters are ye all."

When trouble comes to the believer, he has far different comfort. He may be placed in the most trying circumstances, and every door of outward enjoyment may be shut, but then it is that Jesus comes into his soul, and, in his own mild accents of love, says, "Peace be unto you." See Paul and Silas in yonder gloomy prison. Their persecutors have scourged them till blood trickles down upon the floor of their cell; their feet are made fast in the stocks; and, locked up there in darkness and gloom, we might suppose that their state of mind would be one of unmingled misery. But in their hearts the imperishable principle of peace with God reigned, and so happy were they, that they broke out into a song of such gushing gladness, that the old prison walls for once reverberated to the very melody of heaven.

The man who has this peace can meet earthly trials, not only

calm and undaunted, but rejoicing in all the appointments of his Heavenly Father. A shower of afflictions may fall upon him, like the stones upon the head of the dying Stephen; yet like him he can see the heavens opened and the face of his Lord beaming with a smile of approval. Like the three Hebrews, he may be cast into the fiery furnace; but like them One walks with him there like to the Son of God. Like Peter, Satan may desire to have him, that he may sift him as wheat; but like him he can hear his Lord say, "I have prayed for you that your faith fail not." His frail bark may be launched upon a turbulent sea of troubles; but across the billows he sees Jesus coming to comfort him in the dark night of his sorrow; and "with Christ in the vessel, he smiles at the storm."

Dear reader, to convince you that this is not mere empty theory, or a mere flourish of rhetoric, come along with me in one of my pastoral visits. We will enter this humble dwelling; and, as we enter the sick room, tread softly for you are upon holy ground. Angels are there, and the Lord of angels is there. Upon the bed lies a kind Christian wife and mother, about to close her eyes upon earthly objects.

By the bed-side stands her husband in deepest distress, bidding her farewell as she sinks down into the cold river of death. There, too, are the little children, soon to be motherless, listening to her parting counsels, and imprinting their last kiss upon those cold lips that first taught them to say, "Our Father who art in heaven." She presses her babe to that loving heart, already struck with the chill of death, and, lifting up her eyes to heaven, offers for it her last prayer. And then, with a countenance beaming with peace, she says, "My blessed Saviour has come: "I hear him say, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love; I have engraven thy name upon the palms of my hands.'" She speaks to her weeping friends of a bright world where parting is unknown, where death never shows his ghastly visage, and where all that is pure becomes permanent.

It is thus that peace with God gives complete victory over death. John Lambert, who was burned to death for Christ's sake, in Smithfield, when his legs were consumed away by the



fire, lifted up his hand, his fingers blazing like torches, and cried with his last breath, "None but Christ! None but Christ!"

That great and good man, Samuel Rutherford, said to some ministers, who came to see him, on his death-bed: "Brethren, do all for Christ: pray for Christ, preach for Christ, feed the flock of Christ, visit the sick for Christ, do all for Christ."

The dying words of John Knox were, "Come, Lord Jesus: sweet Jesus, unto thy hands I commend my spirit."

The biographer of John Elliot, the missionary among the Indians, tells us that, on his death-bed, "He was full of peace, of hope, of a calm and full trust in Jesus, that nothing could shake yet his humility, like a guardian angel, ever hovered around his heart, and kept it in safety." Reader! prepare to meet thy God. Get by faith in Jesus that peace that maketh not ashamed, and death to you will be great gain.

'Is that a death-bed where the Christian lies?

Yes, but not his: 'tis death himself there dies.'

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE THIRSTY INVITED.

“Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” Dear reader, if you were traveling along a public highway, and were to hear a loud “Ho!” uttered behind you, there are three questions that would naturally occur to your mind. First, who speaks? secondly, who is spoken to? and thirdly, what is spoken about? Now, we are traveling to eternity, and we have listened to the solemn call contained in the above text. Let me direct your attention to these three questions.

Who speaks? It is the great God of heaven and earth who thus addresses us. That God who guides the planets in their courses, and regulates the wanderings of the flaming comet; who sustains all being, from the worm that crawls beneath our feet, to the angel who rolls his deathless song through the courts of heaven; whose awful voice is alike heard in the sighing of the zephyr, and in the thunder which rolls in terrific majesty across the heavens,—condescends to speak to guilty sinners like us. O let us listen with profound awe, for his very “forgiveness is to be feared.”

When we open the pages of the Bible, or go to the house of God, we are apt to feel as if we only heard *man speak* to us. The result is that we sit in judgment upon the Word, instead of permitting the Word to sit in judgment upon us. Had we stood on the banks of the Jordan, on the occasion of our Lord’s baptism, and had we heard the voice of God directly addressing us from the heavens, we think that we would have felt it peculiarly solemn. If, while sitting in our own home, we were to see a hand start out before us, and write a direct personal appeal to us on the wall, we think we could never forget

it. But in reality there is nothing more solemn in God's speaking to us in an audible voice from heaven, or in God writing a message upon the wall, than there is in God writing it in His Word, and causing the Divine Spirit to point at our hearts, saying, "Thou art the man."

But the fact is that we have got so accustomed to hearing and handling the Word of God from our youth, that we fail to realize that it *truly is* God speaking to us. This tendency to become hardened and indifferent under the very abundance of our religious privileges, is a sad sign of the deep depravity of our hearts. A stranger visiting Niagara Falls, for the first time, is thrilled with awe, and trembles at the sound of nature's most majestic voice, as "deep calleth unto deep;" but the people who have lived beside the mighty cataract all their days are apt to regard it with indifference and scarcely heed the tones of its powerful voice.

So have we seen many an outcast wanderer, who had not before entered the house of God for many years, fall down into broken-hearted contrition under the first sermon he heard, while gospel-hardened sinners sit with utter carelessness under the rebukes of the Almighty. Reader, that holy Bible in your home is an awful visitor. From week to week, the whole year round, it utters God's voice to you. Its presence in your household is one of the most solemn events of your life. By it you are to be judged on the last day; and, above the ashes of a consumed world, that voice you now little regard will pronounce your unchangeable doom.

We come to the next question: Who is spoken to? God here addresses the whole world; and yet he is not speaking to the inhabitants of the world *collectively*, but *individually*. He is speaking to us *one by one*, as we pass before him, in the words, "*Ho, every one.*" There is a beautiful propriety in this, when we remember that men are to be judged individually. It was so when man first sinned. Adam was first called up and judged; then Eve, next, and then Satan. And in the great day of final account *every man* is to receive according to the deeds done in his body, and all will find their minutest affairs investigated, as if they alone had occupied the undivided attention of the Judge.

Whenever men get spiritual profit under the preaching of the gospel, it is when they are made to feel that the Word is a personal appeal to themselves. As long as the sinner can hide himself in the multitude, and talk about how the preacher spoke to *the people*, as if it were a matter of no concern to him, the Word is rather a savor of death than of life to his soul: but when the pulpit becomes to him as a judgment seat; when his long-forgotten sins are all brought up in review; when he is made to forget the surrounding multitude in the deep sense of his own individual responsibility to God; when he is prepared to take the whole guilt of his sins upon himself, and thus to justify God and to condemn himself; when he no longer wishes to have "smooth things" prophesied to him, but places himself under the most searching and faithful ministry he can find, opening his heart to the rebukes of the Lord, and saying, 'Search *me*, and try *me*, and see what wicked way there is in *me*,'—then, and not till then, is the soul in a state to give a hearty welcome to Christ's proclamation of love, that love which thrills the heart with all the power of a personal appeal: "Unto *you* is the word of this salvation sent."

God is here speaking to the world as at a distance from *Him*. Do you ask how I know this? I answer, I know it by the use of the word "Ho." We never cry 'Ho!' to one who is standing near us, but to those who are distant, and whose attention we wish to secure. Now, this distance of the sinner from his God is not a local or a geographical one. In that sense he is every moment near God. His future Judge "is about his bed, and about his path, and spies out all his ways." In company or in solitude, when plunging into the mad scenes of dissipation, or devoured by the iron tooth of remorse in secret, that *eye* that darts through creation at a glance is fixed upon him. And it is this thought that troubles him and dashes many an untasted cup of pleasure from his lips. Wretched man! He cannot even flee from *himself*, much less from his God. The sinner's distance from his God is a *spiritual* one. It is that state of mind in which the sinner makes a desperate effort to forget God; and so far succeeds that though surrounded by God, though spared

by His grace, and fed by His Providence, God is not in all his thoughts. It is that state of mind in which he can live a practical atheist in a world full of God.

He forms plans of happiness, but God is not in any of them. He enters upon projects that will not bear a glance of God's holy eye, and nothing makes him more uneasy than any allusion to the fact that the HOLY ONE is near. Hence, he speaks a great deal of the order of nature, and of the works of nature, and of the laws of nature; and has exalted over the world a certain deity called *chance*. Poor wanderer! he is living in the "far country," self-exiled from all that can make life worth possessing, and yet glorying in his shame.

Reader, God is speaking to you *now*. This is His acceptable time for speaking words to you, by which you may be saved. Do not refuse to listen to Him now, nor have the daring hardihood to bid the Almighty wait your convenience. Now we know He waits to be gracious, but to-morrow may be too late forever! At any moment life's pendulum may cease its vibrations and stand still; the lamp of life may flicker and go out, and leave you to fill eternity with the bitter lamentation, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved."

A late writer, when making an appeal to sinners, uses the following illustration:—"On a part of the British coast where beetling cliffs, from three to five hundred feet in height, overhang the ocean, some individuals, during a certain season of the year, obtain a solitary livelihood by collecting the eggs of rock-birds, and gathering samphire. The way in which they pursue this hazardous calling is as follows: The man drives an iron crow-bar securely into the ground, about a yard from the edge of the precipice. To that crowbar he makes fast a rope, of which he then lays hold. He next slides gently over the cliff, and lowers himself till he reaches the ledges and crags, where he expects to find the object of his pursuit. To gain these places is often a difficult task; and when they fall within the perpendicular, the only method of accomplishing it is for the adventurer to swing in the air, till, by a dexterous management, he can so balance himself as to reach the spot on which he wishes to descend. A

basket, made for the purpose, and strapped between the shoulders, contains the fruit of his labor; and when he has filled the basket, or failed in the attempt, he ascends, hand over hand, to the summit.

On one occasion, a man who was thus employed, in gaining a narrow ledge of rock, which was overhung by a higher portion of the cliff, secured his footing, but let go the rope. He at once perceived his peril. No one could come to his rescue, or even hear his cries. The fearful alternative immediately flashed on his mind—it was, being starved to death, or dashed to pieces four hundred feet below! On turning round, he saw the rope he had quitted, but it was far away. As it swung backward and forward, its long vibrations testified the mighty efforts by which he had reached the deplorable predicament in which he stood. He looked at the rope in agony. He had gazed but a little while, when he noticed that every movement was shorter than the one preceding, so that each time it came the nearest, as it was gradually subsiding to a point of rest, it was a little farther off than it had been the time before. He briefly reasoned thus:—That rope is my only chance of life; in a little while it will be forever beyond my reach; it is nearer now than it will ever be again; I can but die—here goes! So saying, he sprang from the cliff, as the rope was next approaching, caught it in his grasp, and went home rejoicing.”

In the case of this man every moment's delay was making his case more hopeless. As he gazed upon that rope, he knew it was nearer to him now than it ever would be again. He therefore took the only wise course, and at once leaped for the rope. Dear reader, you stand on the brink of the eternal world, and if out of Christ, your peril is extreme. Above you, a God whose law you have broken, whose Son you have insulted, and whose dread curse you have braved. Beneath you the pit of woe opens to receive your soul, made, by your rejection of Christ, ripe for devouring vengeance. Behind you is nothing but a moral waste, strewed all over with the wreck of abused privileges, neglected Sabbaths, despised prayers, and counsels of pious parents and heaven-sent ministers, and dark traces of

your sins. There is not a moment to be lost. The Lord Jesus lets down within your reach the rope of salvation. The voice of your God in heaven is heard urging you to grasp it. Now, O now, or it may be forever too late! Angels pause on the wing of love to see what you will do; all heaven is interested in the result; all hell is moved for your destruction. This moment, while your eye is upon these lines, cast yourself in simple trust upon the merits of that Saviour, "who saves to the very uttermost all that come unto God through him."

We come now to the third question: What is spoken about? The whole world is invited to come and accept of salvation, under the figure of water. This is a figure which is very frequently used in the Scriptures, and with a beautiful propriety. Jesus stood, on the great day of the Feast, and cried, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink." Water is essential to our existence, and is therefore appropriately used as an emblem of the salvation that is in Christ. Let our fountains of water fail for even a few days; let God withhold for a little time the showers that water the earth,—and one wild cry of misery would go up from the earth's population. Let God continue to cut off our supplies of water, and soon our world would become one vast sepulchre.

So, salvation through the death of Jesus is absolutely essential to the life of the soul. There are many who think that human nature is not so utterly depraved but that it can restore itself; that there is a little spark of holiness left,—a little regenerating principle that only requires to be nurtured and cherished, to make man all that his God can reasonably require him to be. This development theory—this fancy of man having a little *spiritual capital* to start with, which, by trading upon it industriously, will make him rich towards God—is one which is exceedingly popular in the present day. It builds up the pride of human nature, and allows man to glory in self.

But it is as false as it is dangerous. The Lord says, "Unless ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, ye have *no life in you*." He does not say that men have *a little life*, which, by good management on their part, may be brought to great strength and

vigor. No ; but he tells us that " he who believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he who believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth upon him." Without Christ, the description that God gives of the human soul is, "*dead* in trespasses and sins ;" and, unless quickened by the grace of God, it must be forever bound in the chains of the second death.

Another reason why water may be used as a figure for salvation, is, its *cleansing properties*. It is the cleansing element which we use in our homes and upon our persons. That man's soul is defiled by sin, is not only a doctrine of revelation, but one of universal experience. God's holy eye looked down upon our world, and the verdict which He gave as to the state of our race was, "they are altogether become corrupt." For this universal corruption, a remedy has been provided in the blood of Jesus, "which cleanseth from *all* sin." But many, in the pride of their hearts, turn away from God's remedy, and propose plans of their own devising. Some propose education and the general diffusion of knowledge, as the remedy for the sins of the world.

Now, I would not say one word against education. Popular ignorance is more to be dreaded than the earthquake, the pestilence, or the famine. The ignorant man, though living amid the refinements of civilization, is still but half a savage. But rest assured that no amount of education can ever purify the heart of man. The first of scholars has often been the first of villains ; and men whose splendid intellectual powers have excited the admiration of the world, have been men of gigantic wickedness. The world is not so badly off for talent as it is for moral purity. The chemist may be able to analyze the intoxicating cup, and tell of its deadly properties ; and the physician may be able to tell of its bad effects upon the human system ; and yet both of them may be abandoned drunkards. The soul of man needs not only to *know* what is right, but to *love* what is right. This, nothing but the salvation of Christ can impart. It alone can bring with it a double blessing—knowledge in the head, and love in the heart. As God is both light and love, so the Gospel, which comes from Him, enlightens while it purifies.



But water may be used as a figure of Christ's salvation, from its *freeness*. How free to the whole race, and how abundant the supply! As it rolls past us in the beautiful river, swells and undulates in the magnificent lake, or leaps and dashes in the mountain torrent, how free it is to all! The pure gift of God, it comes to us "without money and without price." So with the salvation that is in the Saviour. As that river of salvation rolls past us, the Lord's own proclamation is, "Whosoever will let him take of the water of life **FREELY**." Young and old, rich and poor, the learned and the ignorant the bond and the free; all are pressed and plied by the urgency of inviting love, to come. Oh sinner! if you only knew the gift of God, and who is speaking to you, you would this moment begin to ask of Him this *living water*. Wait not to bring a price in your hand, to purchase what is offered you as a gift, but come in the depth of your soul-poverty, and be enriched with imperishable treasure.

That was an impressive scene, when God commanded Moses to strike the rock in the wilderness, and streams of refreshing water gushed forth for the perishing. About a million and a half of human beings were perishing for want of water, and as the hot wind passed over that scorched and burning plain, where all vegetation was dying, it carried upon its wings the wild cry of human despair. By the direction of God, Moses takes his stand beside the rock in Horeb, and lifts the rod that is in his hand, and strikes the rock three times, when behold! a clear, cool, refreshing stream of water gushes forth, and rolls away through the camp of Israel.

See the joy that now beams forth from countenances where, but a few moments before, despair sat enthroned. I see mothers and fathers running with the precious drink to their perishing children, the strong carrying it to their weak and dying neighbors, and shouting the glad tidings in their ears! Now, the Scriptures tell us that the striking of that rock, and the result, was a type of Christ, "And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."—1 Cor. 10: 4.

Those beautiful waters that broke out from the rock in Horeb,

were *free for all the people*. They were not intended for one part of the people to the exclusion of the rest. Suppose, however, that a man had come and taken his stand beside the gushing waters with an empty pitcher in his hand. His eyes are blood-shot, his tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth, and his whole appearance indicates extreme suffering for want of water; yet instead of drinking and dipping his pitcher full, he stands saying within himself, "*I am a poor creature; I can do nothing of myself; it is true I am perishing for water, but I must wait God's good time;*" and he actually stands there expecting that in God's good time the water will flow up into his pitcher and fill it full. How long do you suppose he would have to wait? Would God work another miracle to satisfy his whim, and to indulge his insolence in refusing to use the heaven-appointed means within his reach? No: we can all see the folly of such conduct in temporal matters; and yet in spiritual things many of my readers may be following a similar course.

The Rock Christ Jesus was stricken for you. The waters of salvation gush forth for you. The Lord's own invitation to you, is, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." And yet, instead of taking your Saviour at his word, and simply believing on him as all your salvation *now*, you are waiting for some specially favored time to come and fit you for going to Christ, by making your heart softer and purer than it is now! That time will never come, and your heart will become harder, and you will drift away farther from God the longer you stay away from Jesus. The only difference between one man and another in God's sight, is that one has believed on the Lord Jesus, and the other has not. Here are two men—one of them is a child of God, a joint heir with Christ, a crown of glory in reserve for him, and the favor of God now shining upon his path; the other is under the curse of the law; the wrath of God abideth upon him, and dying in his present state his soul will be lost as sure as the God of truth has spoken.

Now what has made this vast difference? Simply, that the one has believed in the Lord Jesus, and the other has rejected him. This alone will make the difference between those on the

right hand and those on the left, in the day of judgment. And unbelief alone fixes the great gulf between heaven and hell forever! One came to our Lord, in the days of his flesh, and said, "What shall I do that I may work the works of God?" and the reply was, "This is the work of God, to *believe* on Him whom He hath sent." Not a single step can be taken heavenward till this is done.

I have lately seen an account of a conversation between a Christian gentleman and a young lady, who was deeply anxious about her soul, that will illustrate this point. She described herself as "uncertain what to do." "Why are you uncertain what to do?" he asked. She replied, "I have been coming daily to these meetings for four weeks, and all that time I have felt anxious about my soul; but all I do does not seem to make my case any better." "What do you try to do?" "I have striven to convince myself that I am a sinner—as I know I am. But though I know it, as a truth I do not feel about it as I should." "How would you feel about it if you could?" "I would have deep conviction." "What is your present impression about yourself?" "That I am a great sinner—that is all." "And what would you have more?" "That is what I do not understand. My next step should be for deeper conviction. But what further can I do?"

"Your mistake is a very common one," he replied. "Your next step, and only step, is to Christ, just as you are. Go to Him at once. You can do nothing. Hitherto you have been relying upon yourself. Renounce all this as a dishonor done to Christ as a Saviour, and go to Him for all the help you need, hope for, or desire." "Oh!" said she, as if a new light had dawned upon her mind, "is *that* my next step?" "Not your *next*, as if you had already taken one or more right steps in religion. Going to Christ is your *first step* and *only* step. He does not say, 'come to conviction—come to a deeper sense of sin.' But He says, 'Come unto *me*.'"

She then exclaimed, "O! what a self-righteous creature I am! I see it all now. I have been refusing Christ, while all this time I thought I was preparing to come to Him." "Will you go to Jesus *now*?" "I WILL," was the emphatic reply.

Suppose a number of the Israelites, after Moses struck the rock, and after they had seen the waters gush forth, had not only refused to drink of these waters, but had gone and commenced striking *another rock*, determined to obtain water for themselves or perish; their corpses would soon have lain around the rock, awful evidences of the danger of despising God's way of saving us, and of substituting our own. They might have been very *sincere* in their efforts to obtain water by their own works; they might have spent whole days and nights in the most earnest attempts to accomplish their object; but their sincerity would not make the water flow, nor make the Almighty abandon His own plan and adopt theirs.

Paul bore witness to the sincerity of the Jews, when they were going about to establish a righteousness of their own, and would not submit themselves to the righteousness of Christ; but he does not tell us that because of their sincerity, God will accept their righteousness instead of Christ's. No: sincerity is not religion—it does not make error truth, nor change an act of human pride into an act well pleasing to God.

Over a river in Scotland, a strong stone bridge had been erected. Shortly after its completion, a furious storm of rain, of some days continuance, raised the waters of the river to a great height. The wild torrent came down with appalling force, bearing on its bosom the trunks of trees and huge blocks of wood. The arches of the bridge were filled with the rushing waters, and the strong structure seemed to shake under the pressure upon it. A crowd of persons were assembled on each side of the river, afraid to venture upon the bridge, and watching with intense anxiety for the result—when all at once a man on horseback galloped up, and before any one could stop him, rode up to the very center of the bridge. There he stood, and in clear tones which rose above the roar of the tempest, exclaimed, “I am not afraid, my friends; I *know* it will not give way; I am *sure* it will stand.” That man was the architect of the bridge, and he was thus boasting in the work of his own hands. To many his confidence appeared foolishness, though the result proved that his trust was not misplaced.

What a far more rational ground of confidence has the believer in the work of the Lord Jesus! He feels that the foundation is perfect and can never give way. Amid the storms of coming wrath and the thunders of judgment, when great billows of fire shall be rolling across our globe, he shall be able to lift up his triumphant voice, and say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth. I *know* that He will keep what I have committed to Him against this day." Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?

## CHAPTER X.

### THE NEW CREATURE.

The Apostle Paul says, "If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature." I have been at some pains in former articles, to show that out of Christ the sinner cannot really perform any good work, for "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Hence all attempts of men to make themselves holy first, before they come to Jesus, must prove a failure, and if persevered in, will end in eternal disaster.

But it is equally true, that if a sinner truly believes in the Lord Jesus, he will begin at once to abound in good works. The Lord Jesus has done a work *in* true Christians as well as a work *for* them, and he never saves from the *guilt* of sin, without at the same time saving from its *power*. Accordingly, if believers are said to be elected, it is "through sanctification of the Spirit." If they are said to be predestinated, it is "to be conformed to the image of his Son." If they are said to be chosen, it is "that they may be holy before him in love." In short, the only evidence a man can give that he has a *living* and not a mere *dead faith*, is a holy life; for faith "*worketh by love and purifieth the heart.*" An old writer remarks, "Say not that thou hast royal blood in thy veins, and art born of God, except thou canst prove thy pedigree by daring to be holy."

If a man had rather gossip at home or in his neighbor's house, than go to a prayer-meeting; if he had rather run to hear fifty sermons, than practice one; if he had rather talk about ministers and criticise their performances than pray for their success, or pay for their support; if he had rather talk about a thousand sins in his brethren, than mortify one in himself; if he had rather read the newspaper or the novel than God's Holy Word; in fine, if he acts as if Christ was very holy, to save him the trouble of being so, he may rest assured

that though he may pray with the seeming earnestness of an Elijah, and talk of his feelings like a Daniel, and weep like a Jeremiah, all his religion is only the cant of the hypocrite, or the ravings of the self-deceiver.

Among the first evidences of the new creature in Christ Jesus, is a *love for the Bible*. One of the most common remarks which ministers hear from the lips of young converts, is, "Oh, sir, it seems to me like a new book!" They may have been taught to read and reverence it from their earliest youth; they may have committed large portions of it to memory in the Sabbath School, and have acquired a general knowledge of its contents; yet no sooner do they believe on Jesus, than untold beauty, which they never discovered before, gleams out on every page of it, and they exclaim with David, "O how I love thy law."

Nor is this greatly to be wondered at, when we remember that the same Holy Spirit which inspired the Bible has now taken possession of their hearts, leading them not only to love it, but opening their eyes to discern "the things of the Spirit." And I have no doubt that the reason why so much of the professed piety of the present day is of such a stunted, dwarfish kind, is that it is more public than private, and more fed by harangues about religion, than by the pure, unadulterated word of truth itself.

If we read the memoirs of the martyrs and other holy men of God, whose undying example has shone down to us through the darkness of intervening years, we will find that their sturdy piety, vigorous faith, and unbending principle gathered daily strength from reading and meditating upon God's Word. If we read the lives of the men most pre-eminent for usefulness in the Church of God in modern times, we will find that they were all emphatically *Bible Christians*; and from this holy source they drew that strength which enabled them, in the language of one, "to strike the kingdom of darkness with blows that resounded through eternity."

That piety which is fed merely upon public meetings, narratives of personal experience, emotional hymns, sermons, and all that is exciting in religious gatherings, will be found to be a poor, fitful, sickly piety indeed; while that piety which draws

all its nourishment from the Bible, will not only derive most good from public privileges, but like the source from which it draws its life, "will endure forever."

Permit an illustration not drawn from imagination. In yonder small cottage lives a poor widow, whose only son, a child of many prayers, left her many years ago, to enter upon the perils physical and moral, of a sailor's life. Since that time she has heard nothing of her loved one, and has long given him up for dead. One day her pastor is with her, directing her to the precious promises of the Bible, when a knock is heard at the door, and a letter is handed in. The widow perceives at a glance that it is the well-known handwriting of her long lost son. What excitement thrilled through her whole frame! What joy lighted up her countenance, as she exclaimed, "My son is yet alive!" And with what eagerness was every word of that letter read and fondly lingered upon!

Reader, suppose that when she discovered the handwriting of her son, she had laid the letter carelessly upon a shelf till the dust of weeks accumulated upon it before she read it;—would she have shown any evidence of love to her son? Or, suppose, after a long time, she had taken it down just from a cold sense of duty, or to satisfy conscience, yawning and dozing at the end of each paragraph;—would this be any evidence of love to her son? No: whatever might be her professions, you would know that there was not one spark of true motherly love in her heart, were she to act thus.

The Bible is a letter from the Father of love, from whom we have been so long estranged. It speaks out the feelings of His heart toward us, and kindly invites us to return to the enjoyment of His favor. If we take no pleasure in reading it; if we are unwilling to make any sacrifices to understand it more fully; if we are delighted with the light and the trifling literature of the day, and regard the Bible as dry and uninteresting, we may rest assured that it is because "the love of the Father is not in us."

My dear reader, cultivate an intimate and intelligent acquaintance with your Heavenly Father's will. Study the whole



of it, for it is *all profitable*. As a good old Christian once remarked, "The Old Testament is the New Testament revealed." It will be to us a guide through a world of darkness and perplexity; wiping the eye of sorrow; cheering the heart of sadness, and flashing the light of its glorious promises across the valley of the shadow of death.

Another evidence of the new creature, is love to the Lord Jesus. An officer on the field of battle was engaged in personal conflict with one of the enemy, when he slipped and fell to the ground: in an instant his opponent's sword was lifted for his destruction, when one of his men, who loved him, threw himself between him and the uplifted weapon, and received it in his own heart. Now, as the officer rose from the ground covered with the blood of the man who had laid down his life for him, must not the emotion of love have filled his heart to overflowing?

And it is not possible for any one to believe that Jesus interposed between the point of the sword of Divine Justice and his guilty heart, and received in his own innocent heart the terrible blow which the sinner deserved, without feeling the kindness of a love that will be as permanent as God's throne. Hence, all over the world, and under all variety of circumstances, Christians are able to say, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

It is said that after the battle of Waterloo, a surgeon going over the field to aid the suffering, came to a French soldier badly wounded. As he began to probe the wound to find the fatal bullet, the dying man started up with a convulsive effort, and exclaimed, "A little deeper, and you will find the emperor," meaning his heart. So wherever you find a Christian, without respect to color or clime, from the frigid to the torrid zone, you will find that, deeper than the love of home, deeper than the love of kindred, deeper than the love of life itself, is the love of the Lord Jesus. One of the primitive Christians when brought to the bar of Trajan, and asked, "Art thou a Christian?" replied, "I am: I have Christ in me." Trajan then asked him to deny Christ, when he exclaimed, "What! shall

I deny my Lord and Master? *I have Christ in me.* He was immediately led to martyrdom.

Among the first feelings produced by the belief of the Gospel, is joy, and the next is love. If a person were to rush into a burning building and save your life when in great danger, your first emotion would be joy because of your own deliverance, but your second emotion, as soon as you had time for reflection, would be that of gratitude to your deliverer. Thus it is that the reception of the gospel truth makes the sinner *happy* and *holy* at the same time. "Faith worketh by love and purifieth the heart."

Hence it is, that the young convert abandons the scenes of former gayety and worldly pleasure, in which he bore a conspicuous part, because he has ceased to have any enjoyment in them; his new-found joy in God and love to Jesus having given him new enjoyments, as much superior to those of the world, as the sun is to the glimmering light of a taper. His worldly friends think that the reason why he has left their dancing parties and the exciting scenes of the theatre, is the dread of hell or the fear of the censure of the church, or a desire to stand well with his new associates; but this is a great mistake. He has ceased to find any pleasure where he formerly sought it so eagerly, and he has begun to drink of those rivers of pleasure that are to gladden his soul forever.

It is said that there was a deep trench around the walls of the ancient city of Babylon, which, when opened, could absorb the waters of the great river Euphrates and leave its channel dry; so the love of Christ has produced such a full and satisfying joy in the soul, that all worldly channels of pleasure are left dry and worthless.

Whenever I hear professing Christians beginning to inquire what *harm* there can be in the social dance, or what *harm* there can be in the theatre, or in games of chance, I always know that it is a sign that the love of Christ is declining in their hearts, if indeed it ever existed at all. It is an attempt to get something to satisfy conscience, and is virtually declaring that the bread of life with which Christ feeds the soul does not sat

isfy, and that therefore they are anxious to find some *excuse* for getting back to the service of Satan. And, instead of arguing the *rightness* or the *wrongness* of those things of which no truly spiritual mind has any doubt, I would say, Take heed, my brother, to your own heart. Your Lord has warned you, not only against going back, but against even *looking back*; and you are instructed not to *seem* to come short. You are to shun the very *appearance* of evil, and the very fact that you are beginning to glance with approval at the abounding iniquity of the world, shows that your love to the Redeemer is "waxing cold." Take that cold heart again to Jesus; and rest not satisfied till it is brimming over with his love, "who was holy, harmless, and separated from sinners.'

An anxious desire for the salvation of the perishing is an evidence of the new creature in Christ Jesus. Suppose this day that a stranger were to enter your house. His apparel is plain, and almost mean. His cast of countenance is kind and benevolent, and yet a solemn sadness sits upon it, as if the shadow of some big sorrow were passing over it. This stranger begins to speak to you, and his words burn into your very heart. His conversation lifts your mind from the vain and the perishing,—makes you feel as if you heard the echo of those transporting strains that fill the courts of heaven.

You are wondering who this stranger can be, when all at once your eyes are opened, and you see that you are in the presence of your Saviour. He shows you the scars of those wounds he bore for you, and with that mild eye fixed upon you, which broke Peter's heart, he asks you if you love him. With a trembling earnestness you answer, "Blessed Saviour, I do love thee!" He tells you that all around you are dying sinners. That he has shed his precious blood for them, and longs for their salvation with a depth of solicitude of which you can form no conception. And then he asks you, as an evidence of your love to him, that you will go to them and tell them the story of his love, and urge them to flee from the wrath to come. Christians, Jesus *is* thus speaking to you. The perishing *are* thus around you. They live in your houses, they eat at your boards; you mingle

with them every day in the business of life. O, as you love the Lord Jesus, as you value an eternity of bliss, and as you would not, in the day of judgment, be found red all over with the blood of souls, try to pluck them as "brands from the burning."

## CHAPTER XI.

### . WORKING FOR JESUS.

It is a source of sublime satisfaction to reflect that the cause of Christ on earth is destined to enjoy a perfect triumph. We have the authority of God's word for believing that long as the sun shall shine—long as the moon sends her silvery beams across the world—the name of Jesus shall thrill the human heart with the magic of its power. The Lord whom we serve is erecting a spiritual temple upon the Rock of Ages, and “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Amid the rising and the falling of empires, amid the rush and the conflict of hostile parties, in spite of the unholy intrigues of political schemers, and the proud boasts of infidel blasphemers, that temple shall continue to increase in strength and loveliness, till the top stone is brought forth amid shoutings of grace, grace!

But how is a result so glorious to be brought about? Not by a time-serving policy, and a spirit of unholy compromise on the part of God's people; not by keeping in the background the great truths of the Gospel, for which Apostles contended, even unto death; not by splitting God's truth into portions, and calling them essential and non-essential, important and unimportant, in order to suit the taste and to gain the favor of a degenerate world. No. If truth is to triumph, it must be by the display of a spirit the very reverse of all this,—a spirit which bows with the profoundest reverence before the *whole* of the revealed will of God, and cherishes every part of Gospel truth as its life and strength,—a spirit which, while it loves the whole body of the faithful, called by what name they may be, and while it weeps burning tears over a perishing world, still adheres, with stern resolution, to the laws and established order of Christ's kingdom, and had rather die a thousand deaths than yield up a

single fragment of "the truth as it is in Jesus." This was the Spirit of the great Captain of our salvation; this the spirit which inspired the faithful in all ages, and the man who possesses it leaves the impress of his own lofty character upon society, and occupies the high and honorable position of a faithful witness for God.

Much is said in the present day about Christian charity, and of the necessity of its controlling the judgment we form of those who differ from us in opinion. Now, it is vastly important that we should possess that charity, which is first of all the graces, and without which the most high-sounding professions are but an empty name. But there is a principle which passes current in society for Christian charity, which has nothing of charity but the name. True charity is the child of heaven; this has its birth of earth. True charity rejoices in the truth; this sacrifices truth to expediency. True charity is hated by the world; this, by the wicked, is rapturously applauded. True charity thinks of what is *right*, and leaves consequences with God; this thinks of consequences first, and leaves the right to be the child of circumstances. True charity "rejoiceth in the truth." It boldly adheres to what is right, rather than to what is popular, and, undaunted by the cry of bigotry, which the ignorant and the designing may raise against it, "contends earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." It says, "I fear God and I know no other fear."

Dear Reader, I entreat you to cherish unshaken confidence in the power of truth. Truth in the hand of Jehovah is omnipotent, men may shackle it; they may imprison it; they may, for a time, bury it amid the rankest errors, and the most unseemly and unshapen evils; but loose its shackles, give it room for operation, and it will arise, fresh and immortal, and dispel everything around it that wants the impress of its own holy nature. It says nothing against the power of truth, that error is sometimes so prevalent, that it seems to triumph over it. As well might we argue against the pervading nature of light, because there are many dungeons in the world that have never been visited by a single ray. When we darken our houses by

shutting our doors, and keeping out the light from our windows, is this held as evidence that light is less powerful than darkness?

I fear there are many professing Christians in the present day who have very little faith in the power of truth, or in the overruling providence of God; for they will not breathe a syllable against popular error, till they have measured, and ascertained to a nicety, the length and breadth of consequences, and how far they may safely venture without giving offence. Why are men so much afraid of consequences now? O, that like Noah, and Daniel, and Paul, they would but do their duty, and trust God with results! Why should we suspect God's fidelity? Why should we act as if he were a Being who sees no distinction between right and wrong, and who is ever ready to abandon the cause of truth and holiness, which he has sworn to maintain? Why should we act as if he were in the habit of breaking his word, and leaving in their trying moments, those who speak truth and work righteousness?

Beloved reader, my prayer for you is that you may be bold for the truth, and that a double portion of the Spirit of God may be given you, that when the storms of opposition from the world begin to rage around you, you may feel the pleasant light of the sun of righteousness shining upon your soul, and stand,—

“Like some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,  
Swells from the vail and midway leaves the storm;  
Around whose base, while rolling clouds are spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.”

These lines present the picture of a “great head,” rising superior to detraction, and fixing a single eye upon the Saviour, while sore beset by the world's opposition. It is such a picture as is presented in the first Christian martyr—the devoted Stephen. Think of what that God-like man saw ere he forgave his enemies, and “fell asleep.” “Behold,” said he, “I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man *standing* at the right hand of God.” He saw Jesus, not *sitting*, but *standing*. Now, it is said, “When he had by himself purged our sins, he *sat down* on the right hand of the Majesty on high;” and when he ascended

the Father said to him, as evidence that his work was accepted, "*Sit* on my right hand, till I make thy enemies thy footstool." But when Jesus looked down, and saw the dauntless Stephen defending his cause single-handed, in the midst of bloody men, he *stood up* to receive and welcome the soul of his servant. Like Joseph with his brethren, he could no longer refrain himself. O, who can tell with what intense interest the Prince of Martyrs stood and gazed upon him who was proving faithful unto death! Glorious sight! Well might Stephen "rejoice in spirit" when he saw that Almighty gush of tenderness toward him. There he saw a Saviour, who more than died a thousand deaths for him, and whose sounding bowels longing for his embrace, parted the sky asunder, and made the way to heaven ready, ere he was ready to enter. Well may he strike now with a bolder hand the celestial lyre, and roll his deathless songs over the hills of paradise. Who can now forbid him to tell of Immanuel's love, or pluck the laurels from the sacred brow of the martyr? He can now roll on his immortal numbers in praise of Jesus, and none can taunt him with singing too long or too loud of his excellencies.

And what, my dear reader, should hinder us from catching up the chorus? Is the "Lamb slain," less worthy of our praises now than he will be hereafter? What although we hear everywhere around us the hissing of the serpent? Let us drown his loud hissing by our louder praises. Those who work hardest for Jesus now, and are least ashamed of him now, will hereafter shine brightest in glory. While vice walks forth boldly, and reigns rampant, let not Christians be ashamed boldly to acknowledge Christ's cause; not in secret places, but in the face of day; not in whispers, but in tones loud enough to convince sinners that they are in downright earnest, and that they fear their eternal destruction more than any reproaches they can cast on them. Time was when Christians rose with the sun, and boldly sung the praises of the Lord, and made it the very business of their lives to promote his glory. But "the god of this world," not liking such proceedings, raised a storm and drove them into "dens and caves of the earth."



Satan can ill endure the thought that Christians should be as bold for Christ as sinners are for him; and rather than allow them to be so, he will move earth and hell to abash and discourage them. He dreads to see believers stand up for God in open day. He knows, indeed, the power of secret prayer, but he knows also that God will not own prayer unless it is seconded by action. When this is not the case, the prayer is insincere, and cannot be heard. Let our prayers, then, be accompanied by bold action, the bolder the better, unless it be inconsiderate and rash. Our Saviour not only gives us the cup of life for ourselves, but promises us a reward if we help it round to others. He offers a premium, proportioned to the activity of those who become co-workers with him in pleading with others to receive the cup of salvation.

You cannot wish to have the blood of souls upon you in the great day, when the Master appears; then be now faithful in presenting the Saviour to all who come under your influence. To be privileged to tell the glad story of the cross; to stand between the Eternal God and perishing men, as they rush on in haste to perdition, and entreat them to be reconciled to God, is the most solemn work that man can engage in on this side of the eternal world. This work is not committed to ministers alone, for the Lord says, "Let him that heareth, say come." The persons with whom you daily come in contact, are not the creatures of a day, whose knell is to be rung when the light of life forsakes their eyes. Alas it is not to be over with them when they reach the boundary line that separates time from eternity, else might you have some excuse for your indifference. But they are to live as long as God lives, in bliss unspeakable, or in woe of which no imagination can form a conception.

They are now living amid the light of the Gospel, which permits of no neutrality, and which must prove the savor of life or of death to each of their souls. Upon you it may depend whether they are to be saved or lost. O, my brother, this great responsibility Jesus puts upon you! It is a responsibility under which an angel might tremble, and would fall upon our minds with a crushing weight were it not that the same Lord who gives the command, promises also strength for its performance.

Besides, he only asks us to go and tell his truth : he does not ask us to go and be *successful* ; for success is *his* work, not ours. The sinner may scorn your message, and fling back the truth you utter with a proud contempt ; but the fact that you have warned him with tearful earnestness, and with a loving heart, will acquit you of all blame in the day of the Lord.

A father, one beautiful summer afternoon, went out to walk in the fields, with his little daughter, a child of some four or five years of age. While the little one amused herself in picking flowers and chasing butterflies, the father sat down under the shadow of a tree, and fell asleep. He slept but a short time ; but when he awoke his loved one was no where to be seen. In earnest tones he called her name, but echo only answered his voice, when, discovering a precipice at one side of the field, he rushed to its edge and gazed over, when, to his horror, he saw the corpse of his dear child, her fair hair stained in her own blood.

Who can tell the anguish of that father ? He blamed himself with her death, and in wild and frantic words called himself her murderer. It was a heavy burden upon his mind till his dying day. Dear parent, take heed that you do not slumber and sleep in spiritual indifference, while your dear children are dropping into hell ! If their bodies are suffering, you run in eager haste for medical aid, and hang over them in deep anguish ; but, O, neglect not the disease of the soul ! Send for the Great Physician, in believing and importunate prayer, saying "Come down ere my child die." He will hear you, and make your children God's children and heirs of Eternal Glory.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE GOSPEL FEAST.

DEAR READER : I have now set before you the world's hope, as seen in Christ crucified. The great feast of God's love has been spread before you, and you have been earnestly, lovingly urged to partake. "O ! taste and see that the Lord is gracious." It is to me a matter of deep, heart-felt solicitude what you will do with this invitation. Will you reject it or receive it ? Your eternal well-being hangs upon your decision. I am solemnly reminded of our Lord's parable of the great marriage feast, and of the man who came there without a proper garment, and before parting I would call your attention to the lessons taught us by that instructive parable : Matt., xxii., 11 and 12 : "And when the King came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment ; and he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment ? And he was speechless."

Our Blessed Saviour here uses one of his striking parables, to show God's dealings with his creatures, both under the Old and the New Dispensations. A great king is represented as preparing a feast on the occasion of the marriage of his son. There were certain invited guests to whom the king sent a general call to come to the banquet, as all was now ready. They, however, treated the call with contempt, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandize ; while some others laid hold of the king's servants, treating them shamefully, and even putting some of them to death. Against such vile and ungrateful conduct the king's resentment flamed forth, and he sent out his armies to destroy the murderers, and to burn up their cities.

But because those first invited proved themselves unworthy, and ungrateful, is the feast to be unattended and lost? No. He again commissions his servants to go forth with a free, general invitation to all to come to the feast: yea, to go to the highways and use the most pressing invitations, that the banqueting-room may be filled. This is done, the guest chamber is filled, the king comes in to see his company, when one solitary individual is noticed as not arrayed in a wedding garment, the reason for this strange neglect is demanded, but the offender is speechless—he has not a word of excuse to utter. He is, therefore, ordered to be bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness.

Our Lord's meaning in this parable it is not difficult to see. The Jews had been a chosen, a peculiar people, to whom God had committed his holy oracles, and to whom a long line of prophets and holy men had been sent to invite them to come to God's banquet of love. Many of these messengers that came with Jehovah's message on their lips, were treated with the fiercest scorn, and even put to death. The gracious Saviour himself, and his Apostles, invited them to the feast with no better result. Still God treated them with amazing forbearance and long-suffering, for after the crucifixion of our Lord, when the full atonement had been made by the slaying of the Lamb, and in a special sense the feast might be said to be ready, he renewed the invitation in a most pressing form. The Apostles were commanded to begin at Jerusalem, the capital of their nation, and offer them salvation. Yes, the very men who had nailed the Holy Redeemer to the cross, and whose hands were red with the blood of murder, had the offer of free forgiveness through the blood of the cross. God had sent his own Son to them, and they had rejected him, and treated him with the most malignant hate; but that rejected, despised Saviour still invites them, through the lips of his servants, to come to him, and the streets of Jerusalem resound with the glad tidings.

But all this wealth of love is displayed in vain. The last messengers are treated even worse than the first. They became

maddened at the very offer of pardon, because it implied guilt, which they were too proud to acknowledge. At last the measure of their iniquity became full, and the wrath of the Great King blazed forth against them. He sent against them avenging armies, and their beautiful city was burned. Fearful retribution came upon them. Abandoned to their own vile passions, discord, petty jealousy, ungovernable rage, and wild anarchy took possession of the people. Thousands upon thousands of them perished miserably by famine and battle; while the rest were dispersed, as wanderers and vagabonds, among all lands; covering every shore with the fragments of a nation's shipwreck.

But the Great King would not suffer his provided feast to be unattended. His servants went forth to the highways and hedges, with an unlimited invitation. No longer confined to the Jews, nor to the people of any one nation, the invitation was to the whole world, "Come, for all things are now ready." To the Jews the awful words had been uttered, "Seeing ye count yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo! we turn to the Gentiles." The whole world was to be the field of exertion for God's heralds, and salvation was to be published in all the highways of the earth to every tribe of man.

Some, we learn, may come into the guest chamber, which means Christ's visible church, who are not Christians—who have not the robe of the Saviour's righteousness upon them. But the glance of Christ's eye is upon such, and though they may deceive their fellow men, they cannot deceive him. This man was among that large class, who seem to think that to be in Christ's Church is as good as being in Christ himself. Alas! how many now are in the world of woe, who when upon earth were in the outward church! They heard the word of God with deep attention; they broke off many outward sins; they took a warm interest in religious matters; parents and ministers were greatly encouraged, and spoke of them as Christians; they were encouraged to unite with the church, and may even have been elevated to official positions in the house of God; till at last God in his providence applied such tests, or placed

them in such circumstances, as developed their true character, and showed that the root of the matter was not in them. An egg and an egg-shell are very different, and yet at a little distance they look very much alike ; so a man who has but an empty profession may, on ordinary occasions, appear as well as the man who has Christ in his heart, the hope of glory ; but when the testing time comes, which God is sure to send, the difference will be made most apparent.

Standing upon the mountain top, in the summer time, and looking upon the forest clothed in its beautiful mantle of green, you could not tell the trees that are evergreens from the others ; but, wait till the cold, bleak, wolfish winds of winter come, and you will see the difference. So in a church when all is prosperous. A popular minister fills the pulpit, and crowds constantly fill the place of worship ; great numbers are from time to time added to their ranks ; the financial affairs of the church are easy, and it acquires the name of being the leading religious interest in the place. Ah ! then it is very difficult to tell the empty professors from the true believers. But let a *sifting time* come—let the popular preacher leave—let divisions and bitter animosities get into their counsels—let financial difficulties begin to press upon that tender and sensitive part of man—the pocket—and soon it will be seen who are the mere *summer* professors. The true Christians then come out in all their glory ; standing by the church with a warmer affection and a more steadfast zeal, the more her trials and troubles increase. “Like a tree planted by rivers of water, that bringeth forth fruit in his season, his leaf also shall not wither.” The testing time tells which are the evergreens.

See yonder two houses standing upon the bank of a beautiful stream. In outward seeming the houses are equally good. They have stood there for years, answering all the purposes of a comfortable home to their respective owners. But a testing time comes at last. The stream swells, one dark night, far beyond its usual proportions. It overflows its banks, and with a wild uproar, its dark, frowning waves beat upon those two houses. And hark ! amid the howling of the winds and the

furious dashing of the waters, a despairing cry of human voices comes from one of the houses. It has begun to shake and break up under the pressure of the surging billows, and soon, with its miserable inhabitants that trusted in it, it is seen moving off upon the bosom of the angry waters, to form part of the accumulating pile of rubbish that marks their desolating course. This house was built upon the sand, and could not stand the time of trial; the other stood firm, for it was founded upon a rock.

To every man, sooner or later, the testing time will come. It is right that it should. It is part of our probation. Under its sifting power there may be the blasting of many hopes—hopes made strong by the culture and indulgence of many years; some who seemed pillars in the house of God, in the day of trial may prove to have been *rotten pillars*, only covered with a little paint and varnish; but God's true people will stand unmoved under every trial; the severest test having no more effect upon them than the fluttering of the insects wing upon the hard granite rock. "The foundation of God standeth sure." We lately saw a boy exhibit, with much pride, what he supposed was a silver dollar; it was bright and beautiful, and he spoke with delight of what it would buy. But when the testing time came, and he presented it at the counter of the store, it was found to be counterfeit. He wept bitterly, but all the tears in the world could not change the worthless thing into silver. And so the only hope that will pass current at heaven's bank, is a hope founded alone in the death and righteousness of Jesus.

My dear reader, when I think of the worth of your soul, the tremendous peril to which you are exposed, the powerful means you have resisted, and the hardening process in your mind that has been going on; when I see you standing on a precipice, drawn downward by the horrid fascination of sin, O, how earnestly I long to compel you to come in. But how are you to be compelled? Friends can not do it, ministers can not do it, churches cannot do it, vast armies, and the power of kings could not do it; it is not a physical compulsion.

but the tender, holy compulsion of love—the love of Christ. This has been tried upon you, is being tried now; O, if it fails, all fails! If this does not draw you in, you must be forever left out.

The test that was applied to this man was confined to one single point, namely, the possessing a wedding garment. By this we are to understand the garment of Christ's righteousness. If we are covered with that, all will be well; if not, we shall be covered with confusion. The king did not investigate his past life, whether he had been a great sinner or not, whether he had stood well among his fellow men for his moral deportment, or had been regarded as one who had outraged all the decencies of society; the *one fault* for which he was cast out was not having on a wedding garment. This was the test point.

To understand this better, we should remember that it was a Jewish custom, on the occasion of a marriage festival, to offer each guest as he entered a suitable garment. They were not called upon to provide garments for themselves, for men called in off the highways might plead as an excuse that they had no opportunities of obtaining a proper garment. Hence this man was speechless. He had no excuse to offer. The king knew, and he knew himself, and all in the assembly knew, that it was entirely his own fault that he appeared as he was—that a garment had been offered him and rejected.

So it is in the Gospel feast. We are not required to dress ourselves, to fit ourselves for appearing before God; we are only required to put on the holy garb of righteousness, that has already been provided for us. Hence, if we are found at last by the Great King clothed in our own filthy rags, we will not have a word of excuse to offer, but must be covered with shame and everlasting confusion. How effectually does this answer the objection of those who, when pressed to come to Christ, say, "I am not good enough yet! Very true; and you never will be good enough. And it is for that very reason that God has provided a way by which you can come, independent of your goodness. "But," says one, "I am not at



all satisfied with myself." I hope you never will be. The Bible does not say, "Being satisfied with ourselves, we have peace with God," but it does say, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." It is not satisfaction with ourselves, with our faith, or our motives, or our works, that is urged upon us, but satisfaction with Christ. It is not peace arising from an exalted opinion of myself, but from an exalted conception of the fullness that is in Christ.

Dear reader, if in the great day of investigation it should be found that you have not on the robe of Christ's righteousness, you will not be able to plead that you had no opportunities of obtaining it. You will know, and an assembled world will know, and all men and angels will know, that it has again and again been offered you, and that you would not accept it. The Spirit strove, the Bible urged, ministers preached, friends entreated, conscience rebuked, and all in vain! Ah, poor soul! are you to sink at last in the whirlpool of God's wrath, while the life-boat of salvation is near to save you? When the earth reels to and fro, when the heavens are on fire, and the stars are falling, in the light of a burning world, you will curse your folly and madness in neglecting to array yourself in the spotless robe that Christ has provided!

Why not come now, even while your eyes are upon this page, and cast your sins on Jesus? He atoned for sins of every name and of every dye; for sins against light and knowledge; sins against law and gospel; sins of omission and commission; the sins of youth, of middle age, and of hoary years, all have been laid upon Jesus. Your sins, that no arithmetic could number, that no eloquence could describe—dark and black in their moral turpitude as hell itself—the blessed Saviour has suffered for. Freely and fully you will be pardoned. Your guilty fears will all be taken away; your calling and election made sure; your soul, serene and joyful, will delight to follow the lamb whithersoever he goeth; and at last, with the blood-washed throng who have been gathered from the world's highways, you shall sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

It is a very emphatic part of this parable, that this man was cast out because he lacked *one thing*. There was not made out against him a long catalogue of sins and imperfections, for which he was to be condemned. Had he possessed that *one thing*, all would have been well. So is it with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. "He that believeth not, is condemned already." What a watch is without a mainspring, what a ship is without a helm or a compass, what a row of cyphers would be without a unit before them, is the soul that has no faith in Christ. There may be many good things about him, but the one thing wanting is a vital thing. Unbelief is the cause of every sin, the grand root of all iniquity in the human soul. It is the damning sin. That which is filling hell with victims, which is robbing souls of happiness here and eternal joys hereafter, is the God-dishonoring sin of unbelief. The act of faith secures to the soul the garment of Christ's righteousness, and ensures its admittance into the heaven of purity and love, where God and holy spirits dwell. There, in the language of the poet—

"Out of your last home, dark and cold,  
Thou shalt pass to a city whose streets are gold ;  
From the silence that falls upon sin and pain,  
To the deathless joys of the angels' strain,  
Well shall be ended what ill begun,  
Out of the shadow into the sun."

I would call attention to the deportment of the man detected without the wedding garment. He made no excuses; he uttered no remonstrances; he *was speechless*. This is very solemn and impressive. It is far more awful than if we had been told that he uttered a wild shriek of despair! His folly and madness causing his tongue to cleave to the roof of his mouth, strikes us as something far more awakening than words. The wicked rushing about in uncontrollable anguish, and calling upon the rocks and the hills to fall upon them, does not impress us so strongly as this man's speechless anguish. At present, sinners have excuses enough to make, and find words plenty with which to vindicate themselves to their fellow-men, for not becoming Christians. When we urge them, without

delay, to accept a Saviour's gracious offers, they tell us of the inconsistency of professed Christians, the pressure of their worldly cares, the temptations to which they are exposed, the strength and impetuosity of their natural passions, the obscurity of the word of God, and a long list of other excuses. But when they shall come to stand before God, and feel that his eye is looking them through and through, it will be quite different. They will be struck dumb in his presence.

They will then know that God will not listen to *excuses*, but to *reasons*. And even now the sinner knows that he has no reasons to give. But in the light of eternity this will be more fully felt : memory bringing up vividly all his past privileges, every solemn warning he has received, every sermon to which he has listened, every Sabbath when God has come near to him in love, every time that the Spirit has striven with him, every alarming Providence that has startled him from his indifference, all vows and promises and resolutions that have been broken ; these, with all the events of his life, will be present with him, and palsy his tongue into silence. Memory will be inconceivably strengthened in eternity. The whole of our words, thoughts, actions and privileges will be recalled. Our whole past history will be vividly before us. Now, the sinner forgets his sins, fast as he commits them ; but there, they will come up distinct and awful, in all their aggravations of being committed against light and knowledge. Children of pious parents will then remember the counsels, the tears and the prayers of those dear ones, as they labored for their salvation. The seasons of family prayer, the pious books put into their hands, the religious meetings to which they were taken, all will come up with the vividness of a present reality ; and Oh ! if they have all been in vain, how will the memory sting through all eternity ! Think of eternity spent in counting over Sabbaths lost, privileges abused, parental instructions trampled upon, and in hearing again from memory, truths mocked at when first heard ! And then, to remember that it is now forever too late to derive any benefit from these truths ! " Hell is truth seen too late ! "

My dear reader, there is but one day in which you can be saved, and that is the day of salvation. There is but one way in which you can be saved, and that is through faith in Jesus. When the huge billows of the flood surged around the globe, there was but one ark of safety; there was but one means of deliverance for the people of Israel, when the destroying angel passed on his mission of death, at the dark midnight hour; when the fiery serpents scattered death through their camp, there was but one brazen serpent lifted up with healing power; but one rock that sent forth refreshing waters; and on the great day of atonement, but one scape-goat to bear away the people's sins. In like manner, there is but one name given under heaven, or among men, by which we can be saved—even the name of Jesus. And there is but one thing a sinner can do to be saved; that is, to believe in that precious Saviour.

You remember that anxious father that once came to the Lord Jesus with a sore burden of grief. About twelve years before, God had given him a very precious gift, a little daughter; and every day since, he had learned to prize the gift more and more. The house that had so often been made happy by her innocent prattle and merry laugh, is now silent and sad; for the little maid is dying. The distressed father had heard of the wonder-working saviour, and in his deep anguish he said, "I will go to him." And Jesus said to him, "Be ye not afraid; *only believe.*" As if he had said, "Only trust me, and I will attend to all the rest." So it is with you. Jesus has left you nothing to do, but simply to trust in his finished work. Only believe, and all will be well with your soul forever. Ponder solemnly your position before God. Are you found with the garment of Christ's righteousness upon you, or do you want that one thing needful? God's best, greatest, most precious gift is offered to you; can you prefer your own *filthy rags*? In yourself, you can never find any ground of merit on which God can receive you into his eternal home. You can never so live that the eternally Holy One will pronounce you blameless. Come, then, and accept that spotless robe of Jesus, in which you will be presented faultless before God. Only believe, and

trust your eternal safety to Christ. We are told that in a public school in New York, the alarm of fire was given. A terrible panic ensued; a rush was made for the doors, and one of the teachers, a young lady, was much injured by jumping from a window. In the midst of the furious panic, one little girl sat unmoved; and when order had been restored, she was asked how she could sit so still and be so calm, when all the others were in terror. "My father," said she, "is a fireman; and he told me if there was an alarm of fire in the school, I must just sit still." This was true faith in a father's word and wisdom. She believed, and it gave her sweet peace.

"Still there is room in the banqueting hall—  
Room at the Gospel-feast, still room for all;  
To the table though millions already have come,  
Still there is room for more—still there is room.  
Then go call the lame, and the halt, and the blind,  
For all things are ready. The table is spread  
With the wine, and the oil, and the heavenly bread.  
The bread and the oil are the choicest, the best;  
And the wine from the fruit of the True Vine is pressed.  
Such dainties no storehouse on earth can afford;  
The storehouse of heaven has furnished the board,  
Nor will it be drawn while a guest you can find  
'Mong the outcast, the hungry, the lame and the blind.  
To the streets, then, and lanes of the city repair,  
To the dismal retreats of crime, vice, and despair;  
Go to the highways and byways of sin,  
And the wretched and houseless compel to come in."

Notwithstanding all the bluster of infidelity in the present day, I do not think that our chief danger arises from that source. Man is a being to whom worship of some kind is natural; he will have a religion of some kind, and the great tendency of the present day is to a religion of mere form.

We can form but little conception of the struggle which an intelligent Jew, one like Paul, for example, had to go through, when he gave up the splendid forms and ritualistic pomps of Judaism for the severe simplicity of gospel truth. There were the crowds of priests, the smoking sacrifices, the ornaments of the temple all ablaze with gold, the high antiquity and divine

origin of all that met the eye, the fire still burning in the temple that had not been extinguished for fifteen hundred years, with all that impressed the imagination, and fired the patriotism of a devout descendant of Abraham.

If one would know something of the power of these things, let him enter some of those splendid cathedrals of Europe, where everything appeals to the senses. The lofty arched roof, the massive pillars, the highly ornamented windows, the white-robed officials, the chants, and the mighty swell of the organ, that seems to shake the old wall, gray with the lapse of ages; all exert an overpowering influence upon the feelings and the imagination.

The glory of the gospel is not such as appeals to the senses; it is the whisper of Divine love in the soul. It comes with a mighty power, for it is the power of God; but it glares not upon the eye or the ear of the multitude—"comes not by observation," but does what nothing else can,—saves the soul. The holy, spiritual, awakening thought that comes to the sinner—he scarcely knows how—produces a greater revolution, than those that convulse nations and overthrow dynasties, because it saves his deathless soul.

It is the gospel of love; it fills the heart to which enmity was natural, brim-full of love, and love is never ostentatious. When the mother watches by the cot of her dying babe, night after night, she does not proclaim her great sacrifices to the world, but loves to be alone with her God, and her heavy sorrow. In our Lord's days ritualism abounded, and professors of religion could not fast, nor pray, nor give alms, without letting all Jerusalem know what wonderfully good people they were. Our Lord had for the vilest transgressors that came to him in penitence, nothing but the tenderest words and the most loving promises; but for these hypocrites he had terrible threatenings and righteous denunciations, that fell among them like thunder-bolts.

The Gospel teaches to go forth doing good every day, because the loving heart supplies the constraining motive. It leads us to do good because we are God's children, not

because we wish to be thought so. It is the very nature of the good tree to bear fruit, but the chief source whence its strength and fruitfulness comes is out of sight.

The Gospel is expansive and progressive in the human soul. The religion of rites, and forms, and ceremonies does not grow with our growth. It is not brighter and brighter to the perfect day. It goes on, age after age, depending upon the same performances. No matter what the circumstances, it goes on droning out its vain repetitions. The gospel has milk for babes, and strong meat for men. Sweet, gentle truths to woo the young; massive, strong doctrines for the most gifted intellects; and promises great and precious, for tottering old age.

The religion of ritualism is a strong device of Satan to satisfy the human soul with a sham. It says God does not look at the heart, but is very solicitous about the outward appearance. It seeks to satisfy the soul that begins to feel its dreadful loss in departing from God, with the jingle and the rattle of a few childish toys. It seeks to represent God himself as well pleased with empty parade and gaudy trappings. It is the religion of human nature in its deepest depravity, and sends souls into eternity in teeming crowds, with lies not only in their right hands, but enveloping them like a garment.

The soul enlightened from on high, convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit, will not long be held by a religion of form. You may please a hungry child with toys for a little, but as the hunger grows more clamorous and imperative, nothing but substantial bread will do. So none but Jesus can do helpless sinners good. He is the bread of life, and nothing but a personal reception of him, by faith, can satisfy the hunger of the soul. It is a real feast, not a mere picture of one, to which he invites us. To hunger and thirst after righteousness, is the sure forerunner of that blessed state, where we are filled with the fulness of God, and where we shall awake in His likeness.

Much of the blessings of Christianity lie in the future, for "it doth not yet appear what we shall be;" but real and imper-

ishable blessings are now in the Christian's possession. He is now God's Son, and prayer is speaking to his Father; repentance is returning to his Father; faith is resting on the love of his Father; and when he looks up to those heavens that seem to roof in our earth, and sees the myriads of stars that gleam in the darkness of night, his soul is thrilled with the thought of the vastness of his Father's possessions.

One who rejoices in God in this relation, longs to bring all wanderers back to their Father. The heart touched by God's love, loves others; just as the iron that has felt the power of the magnet, becomes itself magnetic.

We see this in the Apostle John. Love was the very soul of his religion, the element in which he lived, the glory of his teaching and the charm of his society. We have heard of the sculptor, who seeing a rough, unhewn block of marble exclaimed, "What a glorious statue dost thou conceal!" So the Christian looks upon the lowest, most degraded of human beings, and sees one capable of being made a child of God, an heir of heaven, a companion of angels. He knows that the roughest block of humanity can, by the Holy Spirit, be made into the likeness of Christ; and for this he prays and labors.

The Apostle, while rejoicing in his present privileges, looked forward to something greater. A rich man may adopt into his family a poor beggar boy picked up off the streets. He may have him washed, and dressed, and educated, and may permit him to call him father, and leave him all his property; but there is one thing he cannot do, he cannot give him his nature, he cannot impart to him his own likeness. But when God adopts us into his family through Jesus, he makes us partakers of his own nature, and impresses us with his image. Men take notice that we have been with Jesus. The spirit and the temper of the Holy One shines out, somewhat imperfectly no doubt, but still so as to show the Divine relationship that has been formed.

That which will so greatly add to the bliss of heaven is, that this likeness will be perfect. No sinful passion shall ever again fill the soul with sorrows and remorse. We shall do



good without sin being present with us, and the song of grateful love shall gush forth uninterrupted by a single improper thought or feeling. Oh, blessed hope! The hope of being like Jesus! How it should ennoble our lives now! We should seek to be of one mind with God, hating what he hates, loving what he loves, judging of things by his standard, to be meek, loving, gentle and unselfish, as was the blessed Saviour. We should stand up bold and unflinching witnesses, as he was, and stooping to any work, however lowly, that he may do good to others. Think of being *like* Jesus and *with* Jesus forever. We have known many happy moments with Jesus and his people on earth, but they do not last. Sin comes like a great pall of darkness, and separates between God and us. But yonder eternity will be the crown of our glory. If we could look forward millions of ages and yet see an end to our enjoyment, it would cast a damp upon our bliss, a dark shadow over our brightness. But forever with the Lord, and forever like the Lord. Oh, what wondrous love is this? To live as long as God lives, and with his mighty love overflowing in our hearts, and all for nothing, all of grace, free grace; surely if we can resist all this, and give up our powers to the love of the world, we can expect nothing but to hear, when we enter eternity, that terrible blast of condemnation, "Depart, ye cursed!"

A man who had been born blind had his eyes operated upon by a skillful oculist, so that he could gradually see objects around him. For the first time he looked upon the faces of his wife and children, his own face beaming with love. At last he exclaimed, "Oh, why have I seen these first before enquiring for him whose skill opened my eyes; show me the *doctor*!" Thus the redeemed shall wish first to see Jesus.



One of the most solemn, most searching, and most humbling questions is that from the lips of our Lord, "Lovest thou me?" It is a deep disgrace to us, a burning shame, that, after all he has done for us, he should still have to ask such a question. No wonder that amid our base ingratitude he causes the awful words

to roll over our heads like a peal of thunder: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be accursed."

Christ's love, as revealed on the Cross, when believed on with the whole heart, is the only power that can sweep the world of its impurities. Wherever it is faithfully preached, it changes the whole aspect of society. Savages hear of it and it lifts them to the dignity of God's children. Idolaters hear of it, and their idol temples are deserted. It humbles the proud, and elevates the humble. It teaches citizens their rights and obligations, and rulers their solemn responsibilities. It emboldens the timid, and renders invincible the brave. It smooths the wrinkles on the brow of care, binds up the broken heart, and dispels despair as it sits brooding over the desolations of the grave. It transforms the slave of passion and sin into Christ's freeman.

The doctrine of Christ crucified penetrates into the haunts of vice in our cities, where misery in its most hideous forms appals the heart of the beholder; and instantly there is a great change. It goes into the cell of the criminal whose soul is stained with crimes which no heart, undebased by deepest villainy, could even conceive of, and it melts his hard heart into tender contrition. Amid the roar of battle it comes to the dying soldier, giving him a peace that is unspeakable and full of glory. It comes to the sailor amid the shriek of the midnight tempest, when his proud ship is cast a naked hulk on the boundless deep, or when the rocks are strewn with the fragments of her perishing strength, and enables him to cast the anchor of his hope within the vail. In short, it comes to every human heart that will receive it, and imparts a confidence that can never be shaken, world without end.

A lady when dying heard some of her friends say in a whisper, "She is sinking fast," when she opened her eyes and said, "How can I sink through a rock!" She felt that she was resting on THE ROCK OF AGES. All who are not on that rock are on the shifting sand, which the storms of judgment will sweep from under them. Reader, many voices unite to urge you to come to Christ. The eternal Father says, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him." The Holy Spirit urges you to Christ, on the peril of

your precious soul. Conscience lifts up its awful voice and calls you to flee from the wrath to come. The voices of loving ones, who have often prayed for you on earth, in tender memories from the eternity into which they have gone, urge you to come to the Saviour they love. A great cloud of witnesses encompass you around, and by the most tremendous motives urge you to a happy decision; and I now entreat you to come at once to our adorable Redeemer—the WORLD'S HOPE.

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